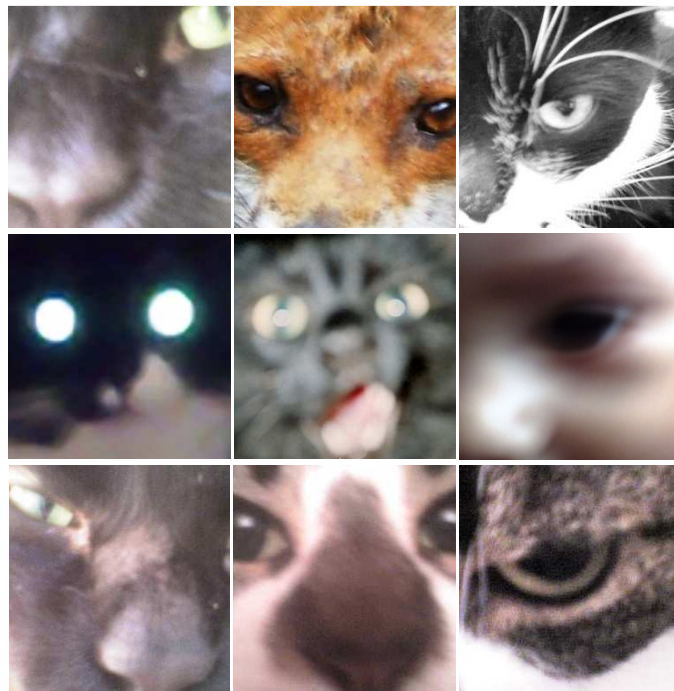


This thesis is dedicated, in every sense, to its vulpine progenitors,  
and to the memory of Y.

With grateful acknowledgement to Jennifer Bajorek, John Hutnyk, Lynn Turner, Bhaskar Mukhopadhyay, Linda Leatherbarrow, as well as to all my companion animals: Poppy, Little Bear, Tuna, Maoki, and Miu. Thanks too, of course, to Jo. And finally, thanks to Makiko—for everything.



Conversely, one could conceive of such a pleasure and power of self-determination, such a *freedom* of the will that the spirit would take leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, being practised in maintaining itself on insubstantial ropes and possibilities and dancing even near abysses. Such a spirit would be the *free spirit* par excellence.

Friedrich Nietzsche *The Gay Science*



# **Zoogenesis**

Thinking encounter with animals

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PhD Thesis

## Abstract

The “question of the animal,” as it has become known, is central—both strategically and in-itself—to contemporary philosophy and politics, and in my thesis, *Zoogenesis: Thinking Encounter with Animals*, I seek to further explore the ongoing deconstruction of the human-animal dichotomy. Therein I argue that, if we are to stall the genocidal machine by which various bodies are reproduced as “killable,” the reinscription of other animals within the domains of philosophy, ethics, and politics remains essential. The interruption of this murderous logic is of the utmost importance, not only for other animals, but also for all those millions of “other” humans who find themselves excluded by the regulatory norms of gender, sexuality, race, and/or class.

Divided into five parts, and engaging with writers as diverse as Nietzsche, Derrida, Butler, Plato, Heidegger, Kafka, Blanchot, Rancière, William S. Burroughs and Bernard Stiegler, I explore the notion of an originary technicity of being within ever broader levels of analysis. Beginning with the apocalyptic zoo-genesis of an “animal encounter” which exceeds every determinable form, I then consider “improper” tropes which function in the opposite direction to the genocidal theatrics of “animalisation,” calling forth instead forbidden place-holding metonymies which hold open the space of invention itself. From there, I trace the implications of the “zoogenetic demand” through the various overlapping domains of ethics, responsibility, nationalism, community, and biotechnology. This demand, I argue, requires a necessarily exorbitant ethics of the unrecognisable other—of an excessive hospitality from which nonhuman animals cannot be excluded—and without which the privileging of the white Western heterosexual male is inevitably reinforced. In conclusion, I argue that it is excessive mutability which constitutes both the *promised* posthumanism of vigilant betrayal and at once the poisonous threat of a collapse into absolute nihilism—a *pharmakon* which must ever again be renegotiated.

I hereby confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own

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## Introduction: Thinking with animals

As the recent proliferation of academic texts, artworks, manifestos, political treatises and so on clearly demonstrate, the so-called “question of the animal” can no longer be penned within the traditional domains of biology and ethology. As a matter of life and death which always exceeds the lives and deaths of “mere” animals, the “animal turn” is rather, as will be argued throughout this thesis, central to contemporary thought and politics. Nevertheless, the multidisciplinary domain that has become known as “animal studies” and/or “posthumanism” is still very much a newly emergent and emerging discipline. The French philosopher and psychologist Vinciane Despret, for example, states that even as recently as 2006 her work would have been sidelined by way of a (gender-based) accusation of sentimentality—the same accusation which, far from coincidentally, had for so long served to bar women from access to the sciences.<sup>1</sup>

Even now, in 2011, thinking with animals outside of the natural sciences nevertheless remains largely a marginalised pursuit. Refused incorporation or assimilation, anyone who feels unable not to “bring up” animals, anyone for whom the right of putting to death sticks in their throat, who cannot not see industrial murder, who cannot not respond to the consumption of flesh, will all too soon become familiar with the dismissive reply: “Why bother?” In a sense, this nonresponsive question has already defeated every answer, insofar as it is a question which can only take place from within the privileged space of humanism. The animals in question, therefore, *must* always include human animals.

It is here, in fact, that the discourse of “animal rights” already falls down, moving as it does within the same or another humanism, redrawing again and again the same unthought lines of exclusion, the same metaphysics of either-man-or-animal. The utilitarianism of Peter Singer, for example, remains inevitably inscribed within the calculus of ends, a human mastery which thus views the animal only according to its enclosure within an ordered technological schema. Tom Regan’s neo-Kantian approach, in its turn, determines the place of the nonhuman animal only according to an essential human morality, and in so doing inscribes human subjectivity as the

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<sup>1</sup> As recounted by Florence Burgat in her preface to Despret *Penser comme un rat* (2009), 4.

ground of the animal. In both cases then, it is man who must determine, and thus delimit, the animal.<sup>2</sup>

Instead, there is only one response to the question “Why bother?,” and that is to always again put “the human” itself into question. Such a response is not only required, but it is of the utmost urgency, even for those who dismiss animal concerns as perhaps laudable but nonetheless most definitely secondary, maybe even somewhat self-indulgent or sentimental. This is because, as we shall see, the *killing*—rather than the “murder”—of nonhuman animals actually serves as the *excluded support* of all other structural excludings, namely those which exclude, extort, and distort others on the basis of race, gender, class, sexuality, and so on. A support, it is important to note, which is *nonnecessary*. All values constituted in and as the exclusion of their binary opposites must thus be understood as both historically contingent and mutually articulating, each one supprting the proper standing of every other.

The question of the animal, in other words, cannot await the answer of the human. It cannot, that is to say, await the inauguration of a utopian human community before being given its turn, the very impossibility of the answer to “the human” serving in such a case to condemn nonhuman animals to an interminable death. One cannot discharge oneself of the responsibility of thinking with animals simply by claiming for oneself a “more important” concern with *human* oppression—an all too familiar repose marked by the delusion of a nostalgic desire for a purely human anything. No one would suggest that one must unfortunately support racism, at least until the exclusion and abjection of women is undone, or that one is free to sexually abuse women, at least until racism has been eradicated. Nor would anyone suggest that politics can and must be limited to single issues existing in isolation. When it comes to speciesism, however, such opinions are not only generally tolerated, but are often explicitly celebrated.<sup>3</sup> However, as we shall see, it is only by tracing the interrelations and interarticulations of oppression that an affective genealogy becomes possible. One cannot, for example, put into question the privileged sexuality afforded to the ideal of whiteness, without an understanding of the speciesist machinery which devalorises

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Singer’s *Animal Liberation* (1975) and Tom Regan’s *The Case for Animal Rights* (1983) are generally considered the founding texts of contemporary animal rights’ discourse.

<sup>3</sup> On this privileging of oppressions, see Carol J. Adams *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, 200-201. On the “intersectionality” of exclusions, see also Rosi Braidotti *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (2006).

people of colour by way of a displacement which shifts nonwhite sexuality towards “animality.”

### **Beginnings and ends: the human**

We can thus begin to understand how the exclusion of “the animal” is inseparable not only from a determining of “the (properly) human,” but also from questions of autonomy and sovereignty, of the subject and of subjection. The exclusion of the animal, in other words, functions to inscribe properly human ends, that is, to inscribe stable human meaning and to ascribe stable meaning to humanity. Hence the link, as philosopher Jacques Derrida insists, between the impossibility of “murdering” an animal and “the violent institution of the ‘who’ as subject” (“Eating Well,” 283). One result of this interminable quest for the ends—and the end—of “man” is the privative determination of “animality” which, albeit variously and fabulously clothed, pads mutely throughout Western philosophy.

According to Plato, for instance, nonhuman animals lack reason and thus an immortal soul. Aristotle then marks out the human as *zōon logon ekhōn*, “the living being possessing language” who, insofar as she is the only animal with the ability to form universal concepts, thus designates the site of teleological reason. Scripture thereafter delivers over every nonhuman animal into the hands and mouths of men, refusing them freedom and reducing them to meat. Descartes then transforms these “mere” bodies into clockwork, simple meat machines experiencing neither pleasure nor pain. After this Kant, in a renewal of Platonic ontoteleology countersigned by Aristotle, insists that only the rational being—by which he means the human animal—can think the unconditional law of morality. This is again repeated, *mutatis mutandis*, by Hegel, for whom only the human can possess an infinite relationship to self. Moving rapidly then through the twentieth century, while Freud avers that nonhuman animals are without consciousness and Heidegger claims they are without death and thus “poor-in-world,” Levinas in his turn refuses every nonhuman animal a face, and thus any claim to an ethical response.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For two excellent intellectual histories of “the animal” in Western philosophy, one crafted in meticulous detail and the other brief yet highly illuminating, see Elisabeth de Fontenay *Le silence des bêtes: La philosophie à l’épreuve de l’animalité* (Paris: Fayard, 1998) and Gilbert



In fact, the list of what animals are alleged to lack is at once finite yet endless, depending as it does upon the ever-shifting requirements of what it means to be “properly” human. One can, nonetheless, offer in its place a short and brutal summary: throughout Western philosophy—albeit with some notable exceptions—“the animal” is constituted as an unfeeling object under the technical mastery of man and definable only by negativity. One cannot murder such an animal, only kill her over and over again, and moreover one can do so with impunity. It is this all too human construction of “the animal” therefore, which holds open the space for what Derrida describes as a “noncriminal putting to death,” be it the site of war, of capital punishment, or of the unprecedented subjection and subjugation of human and nonhuman beings all around us today.

Exploring the movement by which such a space is opened in which a human animal can be “legitimately” murdered is thus, alongside and entangled with the exclusion of nonhuman animals, a major preoccupation of this thesis. This movement, I argue, in the “animalisation” of a specifically targetted human or human grouping—an identity the posited homogeneity of which is always imposed from outside—, functions to exclude the subject of its tropological displacement and, in so doing, constitute a non-subject that can be killed with impunity. By way of this reactive movement of sedimented traces—the solidified dregs of *ressentiment* and bad conscience—one can always again redefine the slave, the barbarian, the foreigner, or the immigrant *as* a “mere” animal. One thinks here of the Nazi demonisation of Jews as *Saujuden* (“Jewish swine”), but also of the photograph taken in the Abu Ghraib prison showing Private Lynndie England leading an Iraqi prisoner around on a dog leash. Indeed, to reduce a singular, nonsubstitutable living being to an essential identity which is in turn reconfigured as “animal” is nothing less than the economy of genocide. Excluded from itself through a murderous theatrics of displacement, a nonhuman animal or an animalised human is effectively rendered speechless, a subjugated body which may be killed but never murdered.

The interruption of this murderous logic is therefore of the utmost importance, not only for other animals, but also for those millions of “other” humans displaced and thus excluded by the regulatory norms of gender, sexuality, race, and/or class. We are

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Simondon *Deux leçons sur l’animal et l’homme* (Paris: Ellipses, 2004). Interesting perhaps, is the fact that neither text has yet been translated into English, despite their quality and influence.

thus faced with an extremely pressing question: are there perhaps tropes that function in the opposite direction, that make it *unthinkable* that living beings can be put to death with impunity? Whilst at the same time remembering that the question of what, exactly, is meant by “living being” is far from being resolved, it is this question which I attempt to answer over the course of this thesis.

### **Neither beginning nor end: the undying animal**

“The human,” I have suggested, depends upon the exclusion of “the animal,” a logic which reserves the space for a noncriminal putting to death. This genocidal logic is, however, further complicated by the fact that this movement itself depends upon the finite bodies of nonhuman animals being paradoxically inscribed as *undying*. By this I mean that “the animal,” as a single undifferentiated body in opposition to the human, is defined both as lacking the possibility of death and as sharing a transparent pathic communication. With each of these reciprocally grounding the other, the murder of a nonhuman animal, as we shall see, becomes *ontologically* impossible, even as corpses are produced in exponentially increasing numbers.

The apparent “fact” that nonhuman animals do not know or “have” language, do not know or “have” death, is simply and precisely an *ideology*, one which, as feminist writer Carol Adams notes, “ontologises animals as usable” (*Neither Man Nor Beast*, 15). Whether as untouched by the Fall into self-awareness, or as absolutely determined by genetics and thus infinitely substitutable automata, this figuration of the undying animal remains central to human exceptionalism. Moreover, the ideology of the undying animal must be understood as an entanglement of both material and symbolic economies. The “question of the animal,” in other words, is a question *of* and *to* Capital: a question of the literal rendering of animals’ bodies, and at once a demand which infinitely exceeds the democratic order founded upon, and conserved by, the semantics of an agent-centered subjectivity and of the sovereign human subject of rights and duties. That the ideologically undying animal, as well as presupposing human exceptionalism, simultaneously reproduces the machinery of Western patriarchy founded upon the illusion of a freely willing human subject, can be seen most clearly in the context of previous justifications of slavery. Indeed, the argument will no doubt be familiar: the white male oppression of people of colour depends upon

the latter being configured as incapable of resisting their “natural” bodily inclinations—that is to say, incapable of overcoming their *animal* instincts—and thus, excluded from “pure” reason, are thereby fit only to be ruled.

With this example, I am simply suggesting that nonhuman animals cannot be overlooked when it comes to putting into question the humanist hubris which claims on its own behalf an inalienable free will or, at the very least, an ontologically exceptional status. Rather, as I demonstrate throughout this thesis, the infinitely diverse ways of being—both human and nonhuman—irredeemably explode the illusion of a boundary dividing responsive Culture from reactive Nature. In this way, one hopes, the delusion of liberalism will finally be dispelled—a delusion constituted, as Spinoza maintained so long ago, in ignorance of the disposition of bodies, a delusion in which subjected bodies come to desire their own subjection.

### **Encountering posthumanism**

Rather than seeking to prop up those tottering relics of reductive division, it will be argued instead that to efface originary relatedness on the basis of the destructive yet empty concept of “the human” serves to severely constrain what animals—both human and nonhuman—might become. By contrast, it is an open relation to this potential becoming which for me defines what I understand by the term “posthumanism.”

Here, however, it is first of all necessary to differentiate posthumanist thinking from the notion of the “posthuman” or the “transhuman” as construed by a number of (mainly liberal) writers. For the latter, as philosopher Cary Wolfe writes, the “post-” prefix rather marks an “historical succession in which ... the human is transformed and finally eclipsed by various technological, informatic, and bioengineering developments” (“Bring the Noise,” xi). According to my understanding, however, *posthumanism* refers rather to both the interruption that always already takes place *before and beyond* every conception of “the human,” and to our *historical situatedness* as subsequent to the deconstruction of the delimited human subject, be it in terms of soul, cogito, ego, or body. In short, “posthumanism” is that which doubly marks us as “coming after” the interruption of the human, and as such demands a thinking which takes place beyond any humanist metaphysics.

I take here as the starting point for any genuinely posthumanist discourse a movement beyond the traditional (Christianised) forms taken by the relationship between the human and the nonhuman animal. These dominant forms, as philosopher Andrew Benjamin demonstrates, are configured by two “original and importantly different determinations” (“Particularity and Exceptions,” 76). In the first configuration, the emergence of the human is predicated on the death or nonexistence of the animal, whereas in the second the human remains in a constant struggle with his or her own animality, an animality which must be repeatedly overcome in being human. These two types or configurations, as will be explored in more detail, endlessly reiterate a logic of dependence-exclusion. For the moment, however, we can note that, insofar as both determinations fallaciously define the nonhuman animal by what he or she lacks within a teleological dialectic, every nonhuman animal is thus figured as incomplete, as *subhuman*. Moreover, this in fact renders “the human” not a site of ontological exception, but rather an *effect* of this reiterated exclusion of “the animal,” a reiteration which in itself *presupposes* a primordial relatedness.

Arguing that posthumanist discourse must interrupt such anthropomorphic hubris, however, is not to say that the movement of humanist exclusion should simply be inverted, positing instead some kind of homogeneous inclusive equality. While such a simplistic inversion would merely reinstate the human-animal dichotomy in its refusal, it is rather the case that a given human only “is” in an originary and complex relational network with nonhuman ways of being.

In articulating just such a posthumanist thinking, I thus explore throughout this thesis some of the philosophical, ethical, and political implications of a rigorous deconstruction of the human-animal division, as well as some of its less-than-rigorous articulations within contemporary “posthumanist” discourses. Along the way, I aim to demonstrate how the figuration of the nonhuman animal as undying is essential to the two determinations of teleological humanism and, by extension, to figuring it a human right to do whatever we like to other animals.

We can thus already begin to perceive why the giving of *a* death potentially interrupts such brutal, murderous hubris. Only initially paradoxical, such a gift, I will argue, returns to *this* nonhuman being his or her place, that is, the singularity of his or her nonsubstitutability. The “having” of death, furthermore, marks the exposure of every living being across an indissociably doubled abyss: on the one hoof, an abyssal technicity of language which necessarily exceeds any reduction to the verbal and, on

the other, an abyssal embodiment which exceeds any delimitation of the organism. A rigorous posthumanist thinking, therefore, must concern itself with an exposition which already confounds every distinction between the interior and the exterior and the organic and the technical.

### ***Zoogenesis: the apocalyptic arriving of monstrosity***

Returning to the central question of the thesis, that of potential tropes which make it *unthinkable* that living beings can be put to death with impunity, I would like to conclude this introduction by linking it with the notion of “*zoogenesis*.” In contrast to the limited *anthropo*-genesis explicated by Martin Heidegger, I instead seek to trace the movements of an excessive *zoo*-genetic transport virtually promised to every living being by an originary technicity. This originary technicity of being is, I argue, the condition of both that which for strategic reasons I am calling the *animal encounter*, and of the monstrous *zoogenesis* to which such an encounter gives rise. *A priori* excluding both vitalism and biological continuism, its difference as and at the origin of sense necessarily derails every judgment of absolute truth and value, undoing every hierarchy of proximity and any narcissistic notion of identity politics.

Instead, originary technics demands the affirmation of an encounter with another whose language “I” do *not* recognise, an “other” with whom or with which consensus remains impossible. In this way, “language” (in a narrow sense) ceases to be the privileged site from which one can sovereignly attribute to another only a mute bestiality. Instead, with Friedrich Nietzsche’s help we will discover the imperative of active forgetting which is, in short, *zoogenesis*—the call of which shatters the psyche in calling forth unheard-of and forbidden monstrosities.

It is this event or encounter which I trace throughout this thesis—locating it in the moment Franz Kafka’s investigator encounters seven musical dogs, in the bathroom of Jacques Derrida one morning, in philosopher Jacques Rancière’s notion of revolutionary performatives, in the moment the central character of J. M. Coetzee’s novel *Elizabeth Costello* is brought to the point of collapse by the impossibility of continuing to be, and in the event which the writer William S. Burroughs claims to have saved him from a deadly, pervasive ignorance. Finally, I suggest that the *promise* of *zoogenesis* resides in the responsibility of a vigilant Nietzschean betrayal, a

response which always again offers itself as a curative to the poison of a certain neoliberal notion of the transhuman. It is a thinking encounter with animals, in other words, which replaces reductive calculation with an ethics of emergence.

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Put very schematically, I aim to explore through the five parts of this thesis the notion of an originary technicity of being within ever broader levels of analysis. At the same time, however, the thesis as a whole can, insofar as it begins with Plato and the inauguration of metaphysical humanism and concludes with a consideration of Bernard Stiegler's recent instauration of the human-animal dichotomy by other means, be considered as a somewhat unorthodox journey through a greatly contracted history of the philosophical animal. Thus, in the first chapter I draw a line from the "birth" of philosophy, through the Judeo-Christian tradition culminating with Hegel, to the philosophy of Maurice Blanchot who, it can be argued, sets the stage for poststructuralist thinking. Here, by way of a reading of the Greek myth of Persephone, we will see how the double negation of "the animal" serves to link Blanchot with Plato, a relation which will make explicit the general homogeneity (with those notable exceptions of course) of the philosophical treatment of "the animal" over the course of more than two millennia.

From there, I turn in the second chapter to Heidegger and Nietzsche, the philosophies of which both represent hugely important attempts to move beyond metaphysical humanism. Firstly, in exploring the differences and similarities between the existential analytic and traditional metaphysics, I demonstrate how Heidegger's thinking of the hermeneutic circle functions within his commitment to a "humanism beyond humanism." In this, I suggest that Heidegger's thinking does indeed break with the traditional configurations of the human-animal relation but, insofar as nonhuman animals are unthinkingly reinscribed as essentially undying, his philosophy nonetheless remains enclosed within what philosopher Matthew Calarco deems a "metaphysical anthropocentrism." From this, we can then see how, despite their enormous importance to contemporary thought, both Blanchot and Heidegger

nevertheless align themselves with a tradition which tacitly underwrites the global mass murder of animals.<sup>5</sup>

It is, however, by way of Heidegger that the radicality of Nietzsche's early text "On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense" is brought sharply into focus. Here, Nietzsche's explication of an originary technics of sense which always results in a stammering *translation* [*übertragung*] opens the space for a far more radical posthumanist understanding of the notion of being-with. Extending Nietzsche's position with the help of Derrida's key notion of *iterability*, I argue that it is only in fact through a vigilant *refusal* to efface the deaths of nonhuman animals that the silent announcing of the over-human [*Übermensch*] becomes possible, constituted by encounters across languages producing bodies "systematically mad" one to another.

In further exploring the notion of an "animal encounter" at the limit of language in the second part, I argue that it is in and as such "individual" singular events that new, historically contingent beings are created. Every such being is, moreover, necessarily *monstrous*: a species of nonspecies which, demanding only its impossible possibility, exceeds every determinable form. It is just this demand, I argue, which calls forth those "improper" tropes which function in the opposite direction to the genocidal theatrics of "animalisation." I begin by tracing the consequences of one such encounter in a reading of Kafka's short story "Investigations of a Dog," from which I then consider its relation to the two figures of nihilism. Here, in contrasting what Karl Marx calls "the spirit of revolution" with the "walking ghost" of parody, I argue that the animal encounter gives rise to a revolutionary spirit only so long as its zoogenetic monstrosity is such that it both *no longer and not yet* makes sense. In order to better illustrate this, I offer in chapter four a critical interpretation of that which for philosopher Jacques Rancière constitutes the *political* promise of the revolutionary performative.

Responding to the imperative of such an encounter, however, requires a necessarily exorbitant ethics of the unrecognisable other, that is to say, an excessive hospitality from which nonhuman animals cannot be excluded. Without this, I argue in the third part, the normative privileging of the white Western heterosexual male is

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<sup>5</sup> This of course inevitably raises the question of the relationship between Heidegger's philosophy (and indeed, of Blanchot's) and Nazi politics, and which makes for some extremely uneasy readings when one considers how the human-animal dichotomy functions within Nazi ideology to de-humanise the Jews. This is considered in more detail in chapter 8.

inevitably reinforced. Engaging with feminist philosopher Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* in chapter five, I thus demonstrate first of all how the constitution of the human subject in fact depends upon a normative network of inculcation which excludes animals, women, and people of colour. Indeed, it will transpire that "the human" is itself yet one more regulatory norm. A norm, moreover, through which all other norms must pass. In order to stall this process, I argue that an "unconditional" ethics must open itself to the chance of those encounters which call forth improper metonymies, and in so doing hold open the place of an impossible, apocalyptic hospitality. In responding to such a call, however, one must simultaneously undergo the risk of being judged socially non-viable and thus nonhuman. It is, in other words, to affirm, as we shall see by way of the fateful and fatal encounters of Elisabeth Costello and Venus Xtravaganza, the risk of becoming a stranger or a foreigner at home, an internal exile or even a domestic terrorist.

In chapter six I further explore the need for a dangerous ethics rooted in an excessive hospitality through readings of the "post-encounter" texts of the novelist William S. Burroughs. Here I demonstrate that, while for Burroughs the timelessness of the wild makes possible an animal-Love which transcends pain and conflict, the restriction of love to some, but not all, nonhuman animals in fact rearticulates contemporary structures of oppression. Such a restricted concept of ethics is, I argue, the inevitable result of drawing a simple division between the wild and the tame, a claim further supported by a critical reading of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's famous notion of "becoming-animal."

As a consequence, I argue in the final chapter of this part that the beginning of ethics thus resides within the detested figure of the Burroughsian centipede. By welcoming its monstrosity within the shared space of the domestic, I thus shift Burroughs' thinking of the posthuman beyond its imperialist logic in a movement which will help us to better approach the notion of a "community beyond the human," the subject of the fourth part of this thesis.

Prior to thinking through some of the implications of such a "community," however, it is first of all necessary to consider the constitution of "the human community" it purports to move beyond, which I do in chapter eight through a reading of Carl Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*. One might of course suggest that such a community is simply the totality of common humanity. However, insofar as "who," "what," or "which" counts as the properly human remains always open to negotiation,



the question must thus turn instead to the *functioning* of the circumscription of a supposedly “common” or “universal” humanity. This then leads to a consideration of nationalism and Nazism, and of how the notion of “community” relates both to hospitality and sharing, concepts with which it seems inextricably bound. Here, I demonstrate how the founding and conserving of “the nation,” and thus the nationalistic, employs the very same economy of dependence-exclusion by which “the human,” and thus the humanist, constitutes itself. Furthermore, we will see that the “fully realised” body of humanism is in fact indistinguishable from that of the pathic, undying animal against which it seeks to found its essential difference. I then propose my own definition of community, that of the shared condition of not-being-able to share. An aporetic formulation which, I suggest, serves to echo the inability and insufficiency which already marks every hospitable encounter.

Finally in this part, I explore Nietzsche’s notion of the posthuman as an animal with the right to make promises. This “right,” I argue, is the promise of a *betrayal* which in fact is the very condition of community, that is to say, of an unending and unlawful betrayal of the *notion* of “humanity” which renders crimes against the human *status* impossible. Such a betrayal, moreover, is at once the condition of vigilance, responsibility, and loyalty, and takes as its paradoxical figure that of the nomad, the lone wanderer ever seeking community and commonality. Such, I argue, is the ceaseless movement of a futural being with the strength to outlive “the human.”

This notion of a promise to betray is further examined in the concluding part of the thesis, in which I explore its relation to the neoliberal promise of the “transhuman.” Beginning with a consideration of the uneven movement from industrial to postindustrial capitalism, I argue that this marks a shift from the idea of a determined linear temporality to that of an undetermined movement of reversibility and “recapacitation.” This rupturing of linear determinism, literally embodied by Dolly the sheep, necessarily interrupts traditional notions of patriarchy and genealogical descent, promising instead a “transhuman” immortality. Despite this, the biotechnological promise of the transhuman nonetheless remains dependent, both for its moral justification and in order to efface the threat of its very *indeterminism*, upon a rhetoric of determinism which represents “the animal” as both pathic and undying. Against this, I argue that what Dolly demonstrates is rather *a writing of and on the body*, and which as such is necessarily subject to dissemination.

This in turn permits a detailed engagement with Bernard Stiegler's ongoing attempt to reinstall a secure human-animal distinction, whereby through a reworked notion of Stiegler's core concept of "epiphylogenesis" I will further explore the promise of biotechnology. Finally, I will then relocate this promise within the wider concerns of *excessive mutability*, thus allowing me to draw the various threads of the thesis together. Here, I suggest that excessive mutability is a redoubled *pharmakon*, offering on the one hand both the remedy of an immortal transhuman assemblage *and* the poison of life-consuming disease and, on the other, at once the remedy of a posthumanist vigilance *and* the poison of a collapse into absolute nihilism. Moreover, the cure of one constitutes the poison of the other. As a result, the promise of excessive mutability must ever again be renegotiated.

Such I will argue is the demand of a thinking encounter with animals, an encounter which can interrupt instrumentalisation and exploitation, putting in its place a vigilant and responsive ethics of emergence which rests upon the excessive hospitality of a giving finitude.

## **Two final notes**

Firstly, I will follow throughout the text the example of Carol Adams and use "she" to refer to any nonhuman animal, alive or dead, whose sex is unknown. I will, however, retain "it" both when citing or paraphrasing another if appropriate (marked by *sic* where necessary) and when referring to a generic *concept* rather than to specific human or nonhuman animals.

Secondly, the notion of "living," insofar as it can never be rigorously differentiated from "nonliving," is thus used throughout this thesis as a kind of shorthand which, if not for its awkwardness, should really always be placed within scare quotes. Furthermore, it should be remembered that "living being" does not—or not only—refer to living organisms, but rather to bodyings or materialities which, always already technical, need not be "organic" in any traditional sense.

## Part One: Formations

### 1: Persephone Calls

#### Power and the Inability to Die in Plato and Blanchot

We must not expose the scientific investigation of any subject to a comparison with the blind—or with the deaf, for that matter.

Plato *Phaedrus*

#### Introduction: Calling Persephone

Let us begin, as is only fitting in considering the domination of the human-animal dichotomy throughout the Western tradition, with an ancient myth.

One fine day, while collecting Spring flowers, Persephone is spied by Hades who, inflamed with love and desire, kidnaps her and carries her off to his underworld kingdom. Demeter, Persephone's mother and mother to the earth, is inconsolable, searching the earth and heavens for her daughter. Eventually, she encounters a river nymph who, for fear of Hades, suggests only that Persephone has been taken inside the earth itself. Enraged, Demeter inflicts a devastating infertility upon the land. A second nymph, however, tells Demeter not to punish the earth, for she has seen Persephone with Hades in the Underworld. Deeply shocked, Demeter begs Zeus to arrange the return of her daughter to the upper world. Zeus agrees, with but a single condition: her daughter must have eaten nothing whilst in the Underworld. Persephone, however, has already partaken of a single suck of pomegranate pulp, and so a compromise is offered: Persephone must spend half of every year in the Underworld until Spring arrives and restores her to her mother for the remaining months. Somewhat pacified, Demeter thereafter returns fertility to the earth.

So goes the myth of Persephone, an allegory of rebirth, of the eternal movement of the seasons, and of the casting of the seed inside the earth. It is a myth too, both of feminised Nature as reproduction, subject to the desires of men, and of the promise of resurrection, Persephone's fate offering consolation to anyone anxious about the afterlife. In short, it tells tales of transcendental return. It is in this sense, as

we shall see, that Socrates, in dialogue with Meno, evokes the name of Persephone in support of his claim that the soul of man is immortal.

The tale of Persephone's return, however, is also marked by a prior detour through the earth, moving briefly from the eternal concerns of gods to the finite world of men. Exhausted from her search, a disguised Demeter is forced to rest upon a stone for nine days and nights. On the tenth day, an old man happens by and offers Demeter compassion and hospitality. Upon reaching his home, however, Demeter discovers the man's son Triptolemus is desperately ill, and thus proceeds to heal him. When she places the boy in the fire, however, his mother snatches him away, unwittingly preventing his transformation into an immortal. As a consolation, a newly-revealed Demeter promises instead to teach the boy the unknown art of agriculture, a knowledge which he in turn will teach across the earth. For this act of original pedagogy, Triptolemus later founds the worship of Demeter, erecting a temple in the city of Eleusis on the site of the stone upon which she sat, and staging there the famous purification rituals known as the Eleusinian Mysteries.<sup>6</sup>

This is a less well-known part of the myth of Persephone, telling of the singular gift of the art or technique of agriculture. Here, I will argue, rather than a Socratic *recollection* as the proof of transcendental reason and thus of the immortal soul, we find instead an *original* act of learning. An act, moreover, directly linked to the Mysteries, the very same rites which Meno is unable to attend. Indeed, Socrates evokes the Mysteries in the *Meno* in order to suggest an analogous relation between the revelatory initiation into divine secrets such as experienced by Triptolemus and during the Mysteries, and the equally revelatory initiation into philosophical truths offered by Socrates himself. It is this, however, which is impossible, insofar as it is the former which puts the latter into question.

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<sup>6</sup> There are of course an enormous number of texts dealing with Greek myths, either in their entirety or with specific cycles. In the context of our argument here, see Carl Kerényi *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter* trans. Ralph Manheim (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), which focuses on the relation of the Persephone myth to the Mysteries. On the Mysteries themselves, see George E. Mylonas *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961). For good contemporary readings of the Persephone myth, see Elizabeth T. Hayes (ed.) *Images of Persephone: Feminist Readings in Western Literature* (Florida: University of Florida Press, 1994), as well as Tamara Agha-Jaffar *Demeter and Persephone: Lessons from a Myth* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2002). On the dwindling importance, and eventual exclusion, of the notion of "the goddess" from Western culture, see Anne Baring and Jules Cashford's huge *The Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image* (London & New York: Penguin, 1993), and David Lemming & Jake Page *Goddess: Myth of the Female Divine* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 1996).

For Plato, as we shall see, the name of Persephone authorises the *transport* of transcendental return, and yet, as the price of divine consolation, she thus becomes a figure of all too human disavowal. While the revelatory initiation into divine secrets undoes the Socratic return of immortal truths, this is not, however, to suggest that the rites practised at Eleusis might somehow partake of the divine. Rather, I will argue, these rites are the obverse of this human disavowal insofar as they seek too, in their own way, to purify the human of its animal baseness. Whether Meno chooses to be initiated into the teachings of Socrates or into the Mysteries of Eleusis, either way his initiation will come at the expense of other animals.

Here, I will argue, philosopher Maurice Blanchot too calls on the name of Persephone, not with Socrates on behalf of transcendental reason, but rather in articulating his own variant of the initiation rituals of the Mysteries. For Blanchot as for the Eleusinian initiates, the animal is ritually sacrificed twice over, firstly *as* the human, and then again *in the name of* man. More precisely, the myth of Persephone figures the anthropogenetic movement of double death we find in Blanchot: a redoubled death first of the external animal which marks the becoming man of man, and then of a second, exclusively human death that is the act of mastery that condemns all other animals to the hecatomb.

It is with these twinned offerings, these Persephone calls, that Plato's inaugural disavowal of the nonhuman animal is drawn out across millennia of Christianised humanism in a line which, ever renewed, ties the Platonic dialogues to the "posthumanist" discourse of Blanchot. With these two purifications, the natural and the supernatural, the empirical and the transcendental, I aim to render explicit the *constitution* of those exclusively human properties—soul, reason and language—which have, since the "beginning" of philosophy, served to exclude other animals as beings without memory, without trace, and without death. Along the way, I will introduce Derrida's "quasi-concept" of iterability which, in deconstructing exactly these apparently exclusive human properties, is of central importance to this thesis.

## First movement

Before Plato, the idea of an essential immortal soul existing independently of its corporeal incarnation was not generally a part of Greek thought.<sup>7</sup> Facing a variant of the “trick argument” in the *Meno* (80e), however, Socrates finds himself obliged, in order to save philosophy from sophistry, to have recourse to just such an idea if he is to prove that adequate knowledge can indeed be achieved. Meno’s “trick argument,” as summarised by Socrates, runs as follows: man can never discover what he knows because either, (a) he already knows and thus has no need to discover it, or else (b) he does not already know and hence cannot even know what to look for or, indeed, if he has found it.

Before he can stage his reasoned defence of philosophical knowledge, however, and immediately prior to the famous geometrical demonstration of transcendental reason, Socrates is compelled to set the scene by calling upon two *nonphilosophical* substantiating sources. First of all, he recalls the discourse of “priests and priestesses,” and then, by way of Pindar’s “divine inspiration,” invokes the goddess Persephone to his cause (81b-c). Both, suggests Socrates, say that the soul of man is immortal, forever reborn within new corporeal incarnations.

One quickly understands the need for such a theological authorisation, insofar as it immediately transpires that for Socrates it can only be on the basis of corporeal reincarnation that knowledge and truth can be recollected, that is, recovered or *reborn*. At this point, however, the soul or spirit has not yet left the body: “the soul, since it is immortal and has been born many times, and has seen all things both here and in the other world, has learned everything that is” (81c). As a result, Socrates argues, a man can indeed *recover*, rather than *discover*, full knowledge insofar as, once he “has recalled a single piece of knowledge—*learned* it, in ordinary language—there is no reason why he should not find out all the rest” (81d). It is this which Socrates sets out to prove by engaging a slave boy in a discussion of geometry. Here, knowledge available for recollection has been learned through prior experience over a great extension of time and number of incarnations, and it is not the case that the soul always already possesses full knowledge.

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<sup>7</sup> The reading of the *Meno* which follows is indebted to Bernard Stiegler who, in a lecture at Goldsmiths in February 2009, spoke briefly about the *Meno* and the *Phaedrus*. See also Stiegler *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 97-100.

The problem then arises that, if future knowledge is necessarily the recollection of previous experience, how will one have *first* learned that of which knowledge is necessarily a recollection? The demonstration of the slave boy's recollected knowledge only serves to highlight this aporia: the boy can recollect geometry only because he has already learned it, so how will one have *first* come to learn that geometry that all men can subsequently recall?

At this point, Socrates *appears* to hesitate. It is a hesitancy, an uncertainty, that finds its fore-echo when earlier he talks of reincarnation only as a clerical and mythical "they-say" (81a-b).<sup>8</sup> Indeed, throughout this earlier part of the dialogue, and in contrast with the certain movement of the later demonstration, there is no *knowledge*, but only an uncertain reiteration of hearsay and opinion. At times, it even seems to take on the ironic tone characteristic of the Socratic style in which a thesis is apparently affirmed only then to be taken apart, stingray fashion. However, its leading of the witness to confess the collapse of common opinion, of the "they say," never materialises. Rather, as we shall see, there is only an absent question, a passing over in silence. Despite this, following the slave-boy's performance this *uncertain* hypothesis, that of a redoubled knowledge learned both here *and* there over multiple incarnations, becomes instead a certainty which, in so doing, departs from the body to become a supernatural apparition, evoked from out of this world.

Having drawn a number of transcendent geometrical truths from the mouth of the slave boy, Socrates then presses Meno:

Either then [the boy] has at some time acquired the knowledge which he now has, or he has always possessed it. If he always possessed it, he must always have known; if on the other hand he acquired it at some previous time, it cannot have been in this life ... if he did not acquire them in this life, isn't it immediately clear that he possessed and had learned them during some other period? (85d-86a).

There is, in this suspension, an obscurity hidden within its clarity—"isn't it *immediately clear* that he possessed *and* had learned them?"—, the moment which marks in silence the shift from knowledge as empirically learned to knowledge as essential possession. When Meno concedes that the slave-boy must indeed have

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<sup>8</sup> This position is taken up again and explored more fully by Plato in the *Phaedo*, beginning with the Argument from Opposites and its less than convincing "leap" to its conclusion (70b-72e).

“possessed *and* learned” the recollected knowledge during another period, Socrates then insists, “When he was not in human shape?” to which Meno simply replies “Yes” (86). Whereas earlier, calling upon Persephone and the priests, Socrates suggests that knowledge is acquired “*both* here and in the other world,” he thus now insists upon such a possession as *only* being inhuman and supernatural. There is, however, no explanation as to *why* the slave-boy could *not* have learned geometry throughout his having been born many times and thus having seen all things. Meno, as is so often the case with Socrates’ interlocutors, merely affirms this without question.

This disavowal of the corporeal, of the material, in seeking to efface the problem of the recollection of *learned* knowledge, concerns, as we have seen, the problem of the Origin and of *hypomnēsis*. It concerns, in other words, the *first* learning which makes possible the *alētheia* (revelation) that is *anamnēsis* (recollection), that is, which makes a discontinuous past available for return in the future. At this point, and still attempting to extricate philosophy from the Sophist aporia, Socrates can thus *only* side with knowledge as an essential possession proper to man. That is, he is compelled to do so if he is to avoid becoming ensnared in a second aporia—that of an originary site and citing of knowledge. Hence, Socrates continues to press Meno:

If then there are going to exist in him, both while he is and while he is not a man, true opinions which can be aroused by questioning and turned into knowledge, may we say that his soul has been forever in a state of knowledge? (86a).

Knowledge, in a move that Nietzsche terms nihilistic, is thus shifted beyond and before the sensible, constituted as an essence that always precedes corporeal being as opposed to being encoded in the language of its institution.

Here though, Persephone eternally returns to haunt Socrates, in that the myth not only offers the consolation of supernatural rebirth, but also recounts the pedagogy of Demeter, who imparts to man knowledge of nature and its cultivation that is at once original *and* empirical. Where these two aspects cross, however, is with the notion of an infinite *natural* reproduction, that is to say, in the “immortality” of its cycles.



## Absolute animals

Socrates, as we have seen, in order to avoid becoming ensnared within twin aporias, is thus compelled to remove knowledge from the sensible world. Knowledge, the mark of an immortal human soul, cannot henceforth be *learned* (and thus taught), but is rather an essential property of the ensouled always available for reactivation. What is of particular interest here, is that in this calculated and arbitrary staging it is *nonhuman* animals—indeed, all *other* living beings—who find themselves sacrificed to knowledge in this unquestioned elision of the corporeal and empirical. That nonhuman beings might employ reason does not, according to Socrates, mark the possession of a soul and thus knowledge but rather, as a result of this decision on behalf of philosophy, only a learned *nonknowledge*. Animal “reasoning,” in other words, comes to mark instead an *unknowing*, that of an automatic response. Indeed, by the time of the *Phaedrus*, it becomes its fabulous figure.

Thus, in his speech to Phaedrus on Love, Socrates insists that a man who surrenders to the sensible and the corporeal is “like a four-footed beast” and thus “unnatural” (250e-251a). At the same time, the essential state of the soul in knowledge is no longer a hesitant hypothesis, but has been transformed into simple dogma: “It is impossible for a soul that has never seen the truth to enter into our human shape; it takes a man to understand by the use of universals, and to collect out of the multiplicity of sense-impressions a unity arrived at by a process of reason” (249b-c). Truth, therefore, is the *a priori* condition for the soul which, *in order to become*, must first see Truth *and then* enter a *human* body. No soul, Socrates says earlier, can be born into a wild animal in its first incarnation (248d). As subsequent to Ideas but prior to corporeal existence, the soul thus functions as the intermediary between essence and existence, between Ideas and their recollection in being. In this, the soul functions much as the *khōra* in *Timaeus*, that is, as the *nonplace* which is the condition of place or, rather, the *taking place* of place which must withdraw in its having *taken* place, and therefore in the appearance of being through which the truth is *empirically* regained, and thus of temporality and historicity. The distinction between the sensible (*aisthēton*) and the intelligible (*noēton*) which subsequently grounds the sacrifice of the animal to reason has thus replaced the tragic composition of *anamnēsis* as *hypomnēsis*.

In short then, in that the soul’s archiving of truth is the taking place of man proved via transcendental reason, it necessarily follows that truth, soul, space and time

are denied to all other animals. The soul, for Plato, can only be *born* into a man, although man can subsequently be reincarnated in an animal form (which, in a variant of the incest prohibition, would seem to prohibit the eating of other animals<sup>9</sup>), because it is *only* man and *all* men—from slave-boy to philosopher-patriarch—who can recollect knowledge. By contrast, nonhuman animals are, as Elisabeth de Fontenay writes, both “absolute animals” and “dead souls” (*Le silence* 71). Moreover, in this patriarchal gendering of knowledge, women are thus, in the same movement, implicitly aligned with the soulless irrationality of animals.<sup>10</sup>

Every other living being, every single nonhuman animal of whatever stripe—and, perhaps, every woman, a “perhaps” which marks the opening movement of the machinery of animalisation—, thus finds herself *a priori* excluded from transcendental knowledge. More than this, she is thus also denied access to its two correlates: *virtue* and *memory* (*Meno* 87b). “The animal,” this putatively homogeneous category of everything that is not man, thus lacks not only a soul, but also the taking place of place—of language and of being-there. She can be neither virtuous nor noble, nor can she recall anything, and thus her being-in-the-world lacks even the trace of existence.

One can understand better this nonrelation of virtue and nonhuman animals when, in the *Meno*, Socrates employs the bee as an example of essential being (*ousia*) in order to clarify the distinction between the essential being of virtue and its various worldly modalities (72a). This analogical ontico-ontological structure thus suggests that the *ousia* of “the bee” as *eidos* shares a common structural discontinuity from its manifold ways of being-bee as that of Virtue from virtues. However, only *man* has the capacity to recollect the *eidos* of the bee (or the dog, or the monkey, etc.) whereas a bee (or a dog or a monkey or, indeed, even an anthropomorphised virtue) cannot recall its own essential form by which *finite* existence is measured. Hence when, in introducing the myth of the charioteer with two horses in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates speaks of how “we must try to tell how it is that we speak of both mortal and immortal living beings” (246b), he is referring not to soulless animals and ensouled humans, but rather to finite

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<sup>9</sup> This question of consuming “animals-with-souls” remains a problem until, with the specific aim of allaying fears of postmortem vengeance, Saint Augustine disavows its possibility absolutely.

<sup>10</sup> While for the moment at least the slave stands within the enclosure of man, he or she is nevertheless—in that a soul can be reincarnated, but never originate, in the form of an animal—held out to a future in reserve and reverse, so to speak. One in which the slave, as a soulless animal reincarnated in human form, finds herself or himself penned outside with the animals.

human bodies in possession of an infinite soul. As the trace of existence, the soul is necessarily the condition of finitude. Ultimately then, nonhuman beings are neither mortal nor immortal, being unable, in truth, to *die*.

Hence, from the *Meno* to the *Phaedrus*, Plato sets upon the stage of tragedy, first through the myth of Persephone and then through the charioteer allegory, a new foundation which, in placing both reason and soul superior and anterior to being, sacrifices the nonhuman animal to the certainty of a metaphysics saved from sophistry. The soul, before and beyond its manifest withdrawal in and as a body, “is” infinite wisdom, that is, full knowledge without boundaries. This limitless knowledge, however, remains forever beyond the grasp of every finite incarnation. In his mortal incarnation therefore, man in his turn constitutes an imperfect copy of an incorporeal, immortal, and infinite wisdom. In this, with a call to Persephone and with the help of the *polis* priests, Plato thus pre-figures two millennia of Christianised thought that will only essentially come into question with Nietzsche. Indeed, it is not by chance that Nietzsche’s critique takes aim at both the Platonic and the Christian at once. Nor is it a surprise that, with explicit disregard for the Socratic advice which serves as an epigraph to this chapter, it is Nietzsche, as we shall see, who exposes the scientific investigation of *any* subject to a comparison with the blind and with the deaf.

### **Iterability and the phantasm of Return**

Despite, and indeed because of, having condemned “the animal” to an irrational, mute and deathless nonexistence, Socrates’ difficulties with the Sophists are far from over. The ground now shifts again, this time with regard to *anamnēsis*. Whereas knowledge was initially re-collected by accessing the *temporal* storehouse of reincarnated reason (the *hypomnēmata*), now *anamnēsis* refers instead to the revelation (*alētheia*) of prior *atemporal* knowledge. As a result, the transcendental Idea—the essence or truth of the thing—must necessarily be always superior and anterior to its manifold appearance in existence, which in turn can only ever be “like” or “as,” but never identical with, its origin. Socratic recollection then, *anamnēsia* as *alētheia* (and seeking to evade *hypomnēsia*), is thus structured as a trope, that is, as a vehicle seeking to faithfully represent the anterior tenor. Indeed, this is not simply *a* trope, but in fact *the* trope of metaphysics: the metaphor of transcendental Return, as figured by the goddess

Persephone. As a metaphor, however, this notion of Return is deeply problematic, as Jacques Derrida demonstrates in “White Mythology” (1971).

Insofar as metaphor “organises its divisions within syntax,” writes Derrida, it necessarily “gets carried away with itself, [it] cannot be what it is except in erasing itself, indefinitely constructing its destruction” (268). This self-destruction, moreover, follows one of two courses which, while different, nevertheless mime one another relentlessly.

In the first, the spreading of the metaphorical in syntax “carries within itself an irreducible loss of meaning: this is the metaphysical *relève* of metaphor in the proper meaning of Being” (268). This first metaphorical movement is, in other words, that of the Socratic vehicle, one which claims to fully penetrate the tenor in order to “finish by rediscovering the origin of its truth ... without loss of meaning, without irreversible expenditure” (268). The specular circularity of philosophical discourse, this loss without loss, thus describes, as Derrida writes with reference to Hegel, “a metaphor which is displaced and reabsorbed between two suns” (268). To rely on the imitation to “reveal” the plenitude of the origin is, however, necessarily paradoxical. Given the temporal discontinuity—its abyss of puckish irony—between the two realms, the revealed “original meaning” can only ever be an *effect* solely of the copy. To be otherwise requires that the *mimeme* exist in two temporal realms simultaneously: both completely inside (plenitude of origin, sunrise) and completely outside (imitation, sunset).

Against and within this first *aufhebung* of the transcendental Return, the second self-oblitative recourse is to that of senseless metaphorical suicide. While similar in appearance to the metaphysical metaphor, the suicidal trope instead disrupts the philosophical hierarchy, wresting away its “borders of propriety” which subordinates the syntactic to the semantic, and unfolding in its place a notion “without limit” (268). In its passage through the “supplement of syntactic resistance,” the “reassuring relationship” of the metaphoric and the (return of the) proper necessarily explodes, resulting in the suicide of unisemic sense.

The metaphor therefore always carries its own death. The “difference” between its two deaths, however, the apparent choice between “good” and “bad,” between transparency and undecidability, is rather no choice at all. By definition, metaphor already supplements an anoriginal absence, and is thus always syntactic and already carried away. Rewriting this in the terms of our discussion, in its withdrawal in

and as the appearing of the mortal being, the immortal Socratic soul thus marks a lack to be supplemented *in addition* to its absolute plenitude. Put another way, both to be an essence *and* to be represented, an essence must be able to properly repeat itself, and yet in repetition an essence necessarily ceases to be proper. As Derrida says elsewhere, “the presence of what is gets lost, disperses itself, multiplies itself through mimemes, icons, phantasms, simulacra, etc.” (“Plato’s Pharmacy” 166). No return without loss, the sun, infinitely exposed, shatters upon the sea.

The translative movement in and as language in its broadest sense—i.e., that of *making sense*, as will become clear in the next chapter—is necessarily governed by the temporal structure of the act of interpretation, and thus discontinuous with truth. In summary, the tropological structure which organises the Platonic Idea must already bring into play, through the similarity of recollection, the play of *mimēsis*. That is, the doubling of the recollection must be faithful and true (i.e. identical), and yet, in that its duplication within existence manifests a necessarily inferior copy, it must already come to differently divide its indivisible essence. The recollection of the Idea is therefore already interrupted by what Derrida calls *iterability*: the cure *for hypomnēsis* is at once the poison *of hypomnēsis*.

Inscribed as the structural characteristic of every mark, every grapheme, it is iterability which determines that language can never be *meaningful*, but rather can always be detached from its anterior temporal position and reiterated in another context, or even simply repeated a moment later in an utterance that is always already altered (repetition-altering). Simultaneously, it is this same possibility of repetition, necessarily inscribed within the mark for it to function ritualistically *as* language, which constrains language to always return and yet always begin anew (alteration-identifying). In this way, iterability marks the similarity of recollection as necessarily *fantastic*. For Plato, the fantastic refers to a trope which pretends to simulate faithfully, and thus deceives with a simulacrum—a (false) copy of the (true) copy—that is, with a *phantasm*.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Plato *The Sophist* 234b-235a. See also Derrida “Plato’s Pharmacy,” 286-288 note 14.

## The deadly labour of truth

This dangerous fantasticity, from which an impossibly faithful copy can (n)ever save us, is nothing less than the existence of every so-called “living being.” It is, in other words, the translative movement of be-ing. While, as noted earlier, this will be explored in detail in the next chapter, for the moment the point is simply to signal the originary interrelation of two apparently unrelated concerns. At its advent, the valorising of essence and *noēton* over and against existence and *aisthēton* thus articulates a founding disavowal of other animals together with an attempt to efface the monstrous phantasm of the fantastic. This *phantasmic trope* which is, in other words, a deceptive transport by which one is persuaded to mistake interpretation for truth—what Maurice Blanchot describes as mistaking the *labour* of truth for truth itself.

I began this chapter by arguing that “man” can properly exist only by externalising and excluding the improper animal upon which it depends, and here, in this same moment and movement, we thus discover that *mimēsis* too, can *properly* be only by externalising and excluding the impropriety upon which it depends. These twinned movements, the closure of the circle of return (the organising trope of metaphysics) and the exclusion of the animal in and as the constitution of this closure (the proper delimitation of the human), are indissociable.<sup>12</sup> Here, moreover, we are returned to Persephone, insofar as her consoling return figures not only the transcendence of the human, but also of the eternal return of the sun, and thus of a fruitful earth forever offering itself for man’s harvest. More than this, however, this myth which elsewhere stands as an allegory of the indescribable taking place of place, here names the phantasm of an all too human disavowal: the name called upon to authorise an access to the essential that is restricted to man alone.

Meno, we are informed, is required to leave Athens prior to the celebration of the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries dedicated to Persephone’s mother Demeter—rites engaged in the search for divine revelation which Socrates compares to the revelation of philosophical truths (*Meno* 76e). Here then, Meno’s future absence marks the text, an absence at once the removal from knowledge. In Ancient Greece, those initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries must perform the following ritual: first, initiates undergo a ceremonial purification in the sea, while holding in their arms a sacrificial piglet. They

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<sup>12</sup> On this, see Andrew Benjamin “Indefinite Play and ‘The Name of Man’” (*Derrida Today* 1:1 (2008), 1-18). Benjamin too refers to the Socratic bee in the context of virtue (4).

then walk to Eleusis whereupon they fast and, while remaining silent, sacrifice their domestic animals in their own stead. Finally, after a ritual handling of objects, a dramatic performance is staged, very possibly the myth of Persephone itself.

In this ritual based on the return of Persephone to the sun, the animal is thus doubly sacrificed. First, a piglet—in a sense *property* but nevertheless not yet fully domesticated, not yet *proper*—is sacrificed in order to purify man, to rid man of his own bestiality. Second, as dispensable representatives and imperfect copies of man, any number of domesticated—that is, completely dominated—animals are sacrificed in order for man to live on, to survive beyond the constraints of finitude and appearance. In short, the animal within is first of all externalised, whereupon it must then take on the death of man in order that man can live forever. Here then, we can understand better why Socrates affirms an analogical relation between divine revelation of the Mysteries and the revelation of knowledge: any number of imperfect, improper animal copies are sacrificed in order to install in man alone an access to the essential.

What remains *as* doubly foreclosed, therefore, is the impropriety of the animal, that is, of the potential interruption of an improper animal *relation* which is always prior to the exclusion upon which the delimitation of the human depends. Here then, a preliminary hypothesis suggests itself: *given that the proper appearance of “the human” depends upon the exclusion of both “the animal” and “the improper,” a potential disruption of humanist metaphysics would therefore seem to reside within an animal encounter marked by an improper relation.*

## **Double movement**

The metaphysical metaphor of closure and return has enjoyed a long and various career, as we shall see in turning now to consider the function of “the animal” within the “posthumanist” philosophy of Maurice Blanchot. Here, I will argue, the myth of Persephone, with its relation to both finitude and nonhuman being as well as the ritual double death enacted in Eleusis, calls to the notions of essential solitude and inessential existence as articulated by Blanchot in his struggle to move beyond Hegel. Indeed, that Hegel should appear at this point is far from incidental, insofar as it is with Hegel, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, that the movement of transcendental Return receives its most compelling example. In the East, he writes, “rises the outward

physical [i.e. sensory] Sun, and in the West it sinks down: here consentaneously rises the Sun of self-consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance.”<sup>13</sup> It is the repressive, irrepressible romantic yearning to master *différance* which is here taken up again by the *tēlos* of Hegel’s Spirit, understood as that which reveals as it regains and retains the plenum (the essence of man) *at last* illuminated by the “true light” of the Western sun.

While Socrates places man above the nonhuman animal by virtue of the capacity to transcend the sensible in the unity of useful universals, Hegel in turn speaks of how man makes himself master of the animals in the act of giving them a name. “In the *name*,” he writes, “its [*sic*] empirical being is removed from it [*sic*], that is, it [*sic*] is no longer concrete, no longer a multiplicity in itself, no longer a living entity. Instead it [*sic*] is transformed into a pure and simple ideal.”<sup>14</sup> For Blanchot, following Hegel, it is the articulation of death, that is, the act of *making mortal*, which founds “the human” and at once marks out “the animal.” Indeed, Blanchot more than once cites Hegel in this context: “the life of the mind begins with death.”

The importance of the reiterated reference to Hegel becomes evident once we understand of what this founding act consists. In *The Space of Literature* (1955), Blanchot writes:

Can I die? Have I the power to die? This question has no force except when all the escape routes have been rejected. It is when he concentrates exclusively upon himself in the certainty of his mortal condition that man’s concern is to make death possible. It does not suffice for him that he is mortal; he understands that he has to become mortal, that he must be mortal twice over: sovereignly, extremely mortal. That is his human vocation. Death, in the human perspective, is not a given, it must be achieved. It is a task, one which we take up actively, one which becomes the source of our activity and mastery. Man dies, that is nothing. But man *is*, starting from his death. He ties himself tight to his death with a tie of which he is the judge. He makes his death; he makes himself mortal and in this way gives himself the power of a maker and gives to what he makes its meaning and its truth. The decision to be without being is possibility itself: the possibility of death (96).

Man thus achieves death, and at once himself (that is, the human perspective), through the founding (of) mortality as a doubled articulation: being-mortal and becoming-mortal. Being-mortal is, firstly, the *meaningful articulation* of mortality *as* the

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<sup>13</sup> Hegel *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, cit. Derrida “White Mythology,” 269n84.

<sup>14</sup> *Jenenser Realphilosophie I*, Die Vorlesungen von 1803-1804 ed. J. Hoffmeister, Leipzig, 1932; cit. Agamben *Language and Death*, 43.



possibility of not-being-in-the-world, that is, the possibility of dying. This, it should be noted, is at the same time the “simple” possibility of “perishing,” insofar as the latter could not exist without the “*as*” of articulation by which man constitutes himself and the world of and as meaning. Moreover, to know that one has the capacity *not* to be is, in one and the same moment, its redoubled articulation, its *re*-cognition which marks its taking place *of* and *in* language. The act that founds the human is thus at once the first human act: the taking place of language as the originary experience of being-mortal *as* mortal. Hence, that I can still die is, as Blanchot writes in *The Infinite Conversation*, “our *sign as man*” (42).

To be human, therefore, is, through the having taken place *of* language, to be thrown *in* to the inessential world of language, which is the condition of the possibility of language and already marked by language itself. Language, meanwhile, is itself a *recognition* and a *representation* of mortality, in that “death alone ... exists in words as the only way that they can have meaning” (Blanchot “Literature,” 324). Ignoring for the moment the reduction of language to the verbal, in this founding *of* and *as* the human we thus discover in the difference of itself from itself the mark of an iteration which corrupts any unity of origin. To be able not to be is at once to be able to be born: we die, and at the same time are born, in and as language. Moreover, given that this movement which structures possibility is at once the movement of anthropogenesis, the nonhuman animal is necessarily excluded both from and by its taking place. As with Plato, for Blanchot too “the animal,” in being denied the taking place of place, thus lacks both language and the “there” of being.

Furthermore, insofar as they are excluded from the ability not to be, nonhuman animals can thus not only never *become* mortal, but they can never *be* mortal and nor, in truth, can they be born. Every nonhuman being, in other words, is denied the possibility of having her own singular death, is refused the possibility of ever dying *this* death. And yet, as we shall see, for Blanchot the positing power of the human nevertheless depends upon the singular violent death of an essentially undying nonhuman animal.

## The memory of death

Having made a preliminary comparison with the Platonic exclusion of the animal, we can now, with the help of Hegel, begin to approach Blanchot's own peculiar version of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Having constituted in and of itself the capacity *not* to be, it is through this originary power to *negate* that the human thereafter avails itself of the power of the negative. Hence, "death seized again as a power, as the beginning of the mind, is at the centre of the universe where truth is the labour of truth" (Blanchot "Literature," 324). It is this appropriation of negation which gives to man the power of a maker, the source of his activity and mastery. Indeed, death is the condition of possibility itself. The question thus arises as to how, exactly, this appropriation of death's power might take place.

As we have seen, the moment must concern the *seizing* of death that is the emergence of negation as possibility, and which is at once the taking place of language as that which, at the founding of the human, grounds the emergence of meaning and truth. In order to understand this movement from being able not to be that is being-mortal to the becoming-mortal that is being-in-the-world of and as signification, it is necessary to heed Blanchot's repeated enjoinders in this context to "remember the earliest Hegel" and, more specifically, the Hegel of the Jena System of 1803-4. Indeed, it is here we find that, for the young Hegel, it is precisely the seizing of the animal's death in a movement of negation that, in its lifting up as the word, reserves and preserves the animal's absence and, furthermore, the possibility of truth itself.

According to Hegel, it is the extended vowel of pain that is both the dying of an animal and the founding act of the human. The *vowel of sensuous animality*, he suggests, transcends its singular violent death in its universal expression: "Every animal finds its voice in violent death; it expresses itself as a removed [*aufgehobnes*] self. ... In the voice, meaning turns back into itself; it is negative self, desire. It is lack, absence of substance in itself."<sup>15</sup> In this sounding of death, Hegel argues, is given the pure sound of the voice, a pure sound interrupted by mute consonants that constitute "the true and proper arrestation of mere resonation" through which "every sound has a meaning for itself" (cit. Agamben *Language and Death*, 45). It is as a result of this "fact" that language becomes the voice of consciousness. Here then, the "mere" vowel

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<sup>15</sup> *Jenenser Realphilosophie* I; cit. Agamben *Language and Death*, 45.

of animal noise is *pure syntax* that is negated not by the breath, but by the death of the animal. This death thus becomes, in a negation of the negation that preserves and recalls the death as it is raised up (*aufhebung*), the founding of man in and as meaning. The nonhuman animal therefore, as prior to the advent of the word, is excluded from the possibility of both consciousness and meaning. In his fine reading, Giorgio Agamben summarises the movement:

“Voice (and memory) *of death*” means: the voice is death, which preserves and recalls the living as dead, and it is, at the same time, an immediate trace and memory of death, pure negativity. Only because the animal voice is not truly “empty” ..., but contains the death of the animal, can human language, articulating and arresting the pure sound of this voice (the vowel)—that is to say, articulating and retaining the *voice of death*—become the *voice of consciousness*, meaningful language (45).

It is, in other words, because in death the nonhuman animal expresses its absence that language takes on the *power* of death, of the negative. It is this moment, when an animal voices her death and thus her absence—in what is no longer animal “noise” but not yet human language—which corresponds in Blanchot to the articulation of being-mortal.

There can thus be such a “thing” as the world for the human only insofar as the existence of the animal is suspended through negativity. There is world, Blanchot writes, only “because we can destroy things and suspend their existence” (“Literature,” 336). In this way, being-thrown, in the taking place of language, to a world of meaning and truth *at once* constitutes the becoming-mortal of man in and as this doubled articulation of death that is the word. With this “second” death, the animal is negated twice over, first in its singular death and then again with the word or name which “is the absence of that being, its nothingness, what is left of it when it has lost being—the very fact that it does not exist” (322).

We can now understand why it is specifically nonhuman animals who are sacrificed to the reclaimed power of death that is language, as written by Hegel and reiterated by Blanchot: “Adam’s first act, which made him master of the animals, was to give them names, that is, he annihilated them in their existence (as existing creatures) [*dans leur existence (en tant qu’existants)*]” (Hegel *Jenenser*

*Realphilosophie*; cit. Blanchot “Literature,” 323).<sup>16</sup> The mark of the human—the taking place of and *in* language, in the negation that is this animal’s death and then in the annihilation of her independent existence—is thus that which always and twice over denies being to the nonhuman animal.

According to Blanchot therefore, the *recognition* of being-mortal is both *a human production and the production of the human*. Without this recognition, existence remains dissolved in its “original depths.” However, recognition is at once negation: “The ‘existent’ was called out of its existence by the word, and it became being. This *Lazare, veni foras* summoned the dark, cadaverous reality from its primordial depths and in exchange gave it only the life of the mind” (“Literature,” 326). Beyond and before the word, existence is rather “the intimacy of the unrevealed” which is always already lost in its being recognised: “The torment of language is what it lacks because of the necessity that it be the lack of precisely this. It cannot even name it” (326-7). This “lack” is what Derrida describes as “the wound without a name: that of having *been given a name*” (*The Animal*, 19). Nevertheless, it is this withdrawal in the wounding of its being forced to make sense *as such* which, as we will see, always remains to interrupt the metaphysics of transcendental Return.

### **The work of death**

Before we can consider the “place” of nonhuman animals within this schema, and how their double disavowal reiterates the practice of Eleusinian sacrifice offered up to Demeter, we must lastly consider the labour of the negative as it informs Blanchot’s notion of essential solitude. To begin with, as the founding *human* event which constitutes the human *as* possibility, the plunging death in and as the word has thus already taken place. In this, it is necessarily “an unsituated, unsituable event which, lest we become mute in very speech, we entrust to the work of the concept (negativity)” (Blanchot *The Writing of the Disaster*, 67). Here then, we see that the word or the name, through which death labours, is at once the work of the negating

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<sup>16</sup> The German original reads: “*Der erste Akt, wodurch Adam Seine herrschaft über die Tiere kinstituiert hat, ist, das ser ihnen Namen gab, d.h. sie als Seiende vernichtete und sie zu für sich Ideellen machte.*” Karen Pinkus translates this last phrase as “thus he denied them as independent beings and he transformed them into ideals” (Agamben *Language and Death*, 43).

*concept*. Indeed, it is by way of this conceptual power that humans are always already withdrawn from unmediated existence, the latter understood as being such that it is only as it is. Hence, the articulation of the concept (negativity) is the decisive event which plunges all of creation into a total sea, the event which Blanchot calls the “immense hecatomb.”<sup>17</sup>

Having posited in the name, however, an *ideal*, this nonexistence thence comes to be mistaken for an essence, as full presence delimited by the absolute negativity of death. This metaleptic reversal marks, in Blanchot’s terms, the “forgetting of forgetting” in and as the creation of *value*. Thus, in this crossing from the immobility of a resemblance (the thing absorbed by its image) which has nothing to resemble—through death—to the noble ideal of the value, the culmination of the life-giving negation of language is reached whereby the image becomes the object’s “aftermath.” In this aftermath, the object itself is thus withdrawn from understanding in such a way as to allow “us to have the object at our command when there is nothing left of it” (*Space of Literature*, 260). Such a reversal is, moreover, the condition for “the accomplishment of true tasks” (260). In this abolishment through reappropriation to the Same (those easy illusions of petrified “truths”), we thus discover a mis-taking of consequence for cause which Nietzsche calls the corruption of reason.

Language can now be understood as the work of death in the world, that which drives—

the inhuman, indeterminate side of things back into nothingness .... But at the same time, after having denied things in their existence, it preserves them in their being; it causes things to have meaning, and the negation which is death at work is also the advent of meaning, the activity of comprehension (“Literature,” 338).

In summary then, it is through the animal’s death that the human is constituted as *being-mortal*, that is, as having the possibility *not* to be. At the same time, this singular nonhuman death realises the power of negativity in being seized over again as activity and mastery which marks the *becoming-mortal* of the human. This latter inheres in the act of naming which, constituting the power of a maker, gives to what she makes its meaning and its truth.

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<sup>17</sup> The use of the word “hecatomb” is interesting in this context, referring as it does to the ritual sacrifice of one hundred “cattle.”

For Blanchot, it is therefore the voice of death which, articulating and preserving as both memory and absence, as the trace or space of withdrawal, marks the *taking* place of language. A taking place, moreover, which is at once the opening of the space of recognition and thus of the name, that is to say, of language having *taken* place. In this way death is doubled and divided, that which constitutes the world and its representation. In other words, these two moments—the possibility of *not-being-in-the-world* and the decision *to be without being*—constitute the indissociable moments and movements of language itself, corresponding to the redoubled articulation of being- and becoming-mortal. Hence, it is the taking place *of* and *in* language by which the human finds himself cast into a world *of* and *as* image at once deprived of existence. In this double expropriation of death, the essential is forgotten, and the originary forgetting that is itself the world (to *be* mortal) is itself forgotten (to *become* mortal).

In this forgetting of forgetting, existence is thus always already lost. At best, a human animal might sense its approach in the work of art, but its hovering appearance has nevertheless already escaped. Existence, by contrast, “is” “the side of the day that day has rejected in order to become light” (“Literature,” 328). It is this which Blanchot describes as “essential solitude,” an inhuman machinery with neither beginning nor end: “death as the impossibility of dying” (328). Only in the obliterating clarity of a meaningful humanity, in other words, can the work of death be found.

### **An initiation into the new Eleusinian Mysteries**

It is only the human then, which comes to be upon the death of a deathless animal, who can give meaning to nonhuman existence. Only “man” stands in the light of the negative, only the human animal is enlightened. This, I will argue, turns us back across millennia to the myth of Persephone’s return to the light and, in particular, to Demeter’s place of rest and worship in Eleusis. As we have seen, to be initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries an appellant must, in silence, first sacrifice a piglet, followed by any number of domestic animals. We have seen too, how this relates to the Platonic exclusion of “the animal” from “the human,” in which the animal within is first externalised, after which “it” must then bear the death of man in order that man might live forever. Here, with Blanchot, we discover a mirror-image of this all too human

movement: in place of the “birth” of an immortal human soul, however, we find instead the annihilating genesis of the human at the origin of the world. Instead of the double sacrifice which installs in man alone an access to the essential, there is the double sacrifice which installs in man alone an access to the *inessential*.

In Ancient Greece, we recall, the initial sacrifice involving the death of a single nonhuman animal served to purify the human of its bestiality. That is, by way of this first death the human ceases to be an animal. It is in this moment therefore, that the human finds itself the master of nature, able to dominate and domesticate other animals. However, it is this mastery which requires a second sacrifice. Only the fact of being domesticated condemns the other animals to annihilation, to a hecatomb which serves only to vouchsafe the mastery of the human. This, as should be clear, equally describes the double sacrifice which underpins Blanchot’s own metaphysical anthropocentrism: “the animal” is ritually sacrificed twice over, firstly *as* the human, and then again *in the name of* the human.

### **Doubly deceased: the mute deposition of nonhuman animals**

The question now arises, as to how might the taking place, or otherwise, of nonhuman animals arrive to potentially interrupt these sacrificial schemas imposed upon them from without for millennia. As suggested earlier, this potential disruption would seem to reside in an animal encounter marked by an improper relation. To this we can now add that such an encounter appears equally to require the reinscription of death within nonhuman ways of being. Indeed, by further considering the placeless place of the animal in Blanchot’s philosophy in these final sections, as well as its proximity or otherwise to the Heideggerian animal, we shall begin to open the space for just such an animal encounter to come.

Blanchot’s animal is, as we have seen, doubly deceased, that is, doubly depositioned and decomposed. Nevertheless, nonhuman animals continue to keep getting in the way, an uncanny obtrusion which brings into the open the implicit humanism of Blanchot’s discourse.<sup>18</sup> As being-in-the-world and yet deprived of the deluge of language that “is” death and vice versa, an animal “is” therefore mortal

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<sup>18</sup> While Blanchot indirectly addresses “actual” nonhuman animals in relation to Rilke (*Space of Literature*, 135), their position nonetheless remains obscure.

without recognising it (and thus not, in truth, mortal). Moreover, as that which does not have her (own) death, she “is” necessarily senseless and meaningless being. In other words, insofar as she is excluded from the “unsituated, unsituable event” that is language’s having already taken place, and thus from finitude that is its condition, the nonhuman animal necessarily exists *before* the annihilation of Adam’s positing power. At the same time, however, she nonetheless remains, indeed co-exists, *after* the world thus posited. At the very least then, she exists in some strange sense that “is” at once both before and after the Fall.

Without language, and thus *prior to being as such*, nonhuman animals are thus allocated only some uncanny kind of *not yet-world world*. A “world,” in other words, which always already lacks both possibility and resemblance. At the same time, however, there can *be* no beyond or before *being as such* either, that is, beyond or before what Blanchot terms essential solitude—this latter understood as remarking the hiddenness of existence by the disappearance of everything that is, i.e., by the withdrawal of being that “is” the mark *as such*. For nonhuman animals, therefore, there is, on the one pincer, no hiddenness of existence and thus only the nonbeing that “is” being-in-the-world. On the other, however, insofar as there can be no “as,” no articulation or image, there can thus be no inessential “world” that would be the mark of this nonbeing. In short, nonhuman animals neither *are* nor *are not*, neither being nor nonbeing, but something absolutely other. They “are,” in other words, both within and yet outside the world at the same time as they are neither within nor outside the world: animal spirits or ghosts of nonhumanity.

### **Spectres of Heidegger**

This spectrality of animals points to an initial point of both proximity and distance between Blanchot and Heidegger. In Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1927), the animal barely raises her head before finding herself similarly (non)placed in negativity: *not* present-at-hand [*Vorhandensein*], *not* ready-at-hand [*Zuhandensein*] and, most definitely, *not* the Dasein who, as something other and more than a living being, is abysmally distanced from the nonhuman animal who “merely” has life and thus can only “perish [*verenden*].” Located entirely negatively, this spectral figure of the animal nevertheless remains to haunt Heidegger.



Returning to the question two years later in a seminar entitled *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (1929/1930), Heidegger is thus called to devote almost one-hundred-and-forty pages to a questioning of the “essence of animality”—a questioning which, it should be noted, presupposes an ignominious reduction of the vast multiplicity of “living beings” to a single homogeneous “essence.” Along the way, he reiterates the unbridgeable distance between the Dasein and the animal in much the same terms as before, asserting that, despite their physical proximity, “being-with [*Mitsein*] [animals] is not an *existing-with* [*Mitexistieren*], because a dog does not exist but merely lives.”<sup>19</sup> Such a way as Heidegger embarks upon is most certainly not, as he makes explicit, “an animal kind of way,” but is rather “a going along with ... and yet not” (210). Another way to say this would be that for Heidegger, as will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, the proximity of the nonhuman animal paradoxically functions to instaurate a human (or at least Dasein) exceptionalism.

Given the importance of the “way [*Weg*]” for Heidegger’s thinking, such a way of going which explicitly involves *not* going *with* calls for a detailed analysis of its own, but in the present context it is enough to wonder about this uncanny crossing of proximity and distance that makes of every nonhuman animal irreducibly other. Is this not another crossing which is perhaps a haunting, perhaps even a possession, in that the Dasein would seem to share without sharing its “there” with a living being who does not exist?

It is thus unsurprising that we find a similar proximal distancing of the animal operating within Blanchot’s discourse. Indeed, Blanchot employs a very similar vocabulary in order to get his metaphysics up on its rear legs and running. Men and only men, he writes, “are infinitely mortal, a little more than mortal. Everything is perishable, but we [humans] are the most perishable” (*Space of Literature*, 140). As with Heidegger, a nonhuman animal might “perish,” but she can never *die*—that is to say, she can never “be” mortal—insofar as it is precisely this which is the something *more*, the something *exceptional*, which marks out the human. Death appears, Blanchot asserts—

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<sup>19</sup> Martin Heidegger *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, 210; my emphasis. Henceforth cited as *FCM*.

between me, *as I speak*, and the being I address: it is there between us as the distance that separates us, but this distance is also what prevents us from being separated, because it contains the condition for all understanding. ... Without death, everything would sink into absurdity and nothingness ("Literature," 324).

Death, for Blanchot, is "*a power that humanises nature, raises existence to being*, and ... is within each one of us as our most human quality" (337, my emphasis). Nonhuman animals, however, in being essentially *deprived* of death's power which makes of man a mortal being, therefore exist as *absurdity and nothingness*. Existence, in other words, that *is not* being (and thus nothingness) and *is not* nonbeing (and thus an absurdity). At the same time, in being excluded from meaning, that is, from becoming mortal, the hugely divergent ways of being animal are reduced to an *undifferentiated* existence which at once lacks that which prevents absolute separation from one another. We thus discover a vertiginous proximal distancing which posits nonhuman animals as those which are cast off which cannot be separated, as those who are excluded who cannot be excluded. Moreover, insofar as this proximal distance instituted by the double death is, insists Blanchot, the condition for both community and communication, nonhuman animals with equal necessity thus lack both.<sup>20</sup>

In concluding this prefatory sketch of the mirroring of ancient and modern philosophical constructions of the undying animal, however, it should be noted that a further, profound difference separates Blanchot's formulation from that of Plato, insofar as Blanchot employs one of the traditional *Christianised* forms of the human-animal relationship. These dominant later forms, as outlined in the introduction, are founded upon a teleological dialectic which posits the emergence of "the human" as predicated either upon the death or nonexistence of "the animal," or else upon its ever reiterated overcoming.

In the next chapter, I will consider the movement of anthropogenesis within Heidegger's discourse, a consideration which will, in its turn, lead us, with Nietzsche's help, to a more radical notion of *zoogenesis* from which nonhuman beings can no longer be excluded. Here, however, the corresponding movement within Blanchot's "posthumanism" should by now be clear. Constituted in absolute lack—of death, of existence, of meaning, of separation, of community and of communication—the animal necessarily precedes the human, which founds its being on the negation of the animal.

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<sup>20</sup> On this, see Andrew Benjamin "Another Naming, a Living Animal: Blanchot's Community" *SubStance* #117, 37:3 (2008), 207-227.

In elaborating what is a very traditional humanist dialectical teleology, Blanchot is thus ultimately unable to break free from Hegel.<sup>21</sup>

More than this, however, it is an example of a philosophy of decentred subjectivity which nonetheless reproduces the dominant humanist forms of the human-animal relation—hence its exemplary position here. Indeed, Blanchot’s philosophy is doubly apposite in this regard, insofar as the production of the human is here predicated on both the death *and* the nonexistence of the animal in its double dis-position. Its modern initiation, however, simply offers another Mystery, that of the uncanny placeless place of “the animal” which calls again upon Persephone and the myth of undying Nature—that is, upon a theology and a teleology—in order to preserve for “the human” alone both privilege and mastery within an otherwise soulless world. It is in moving beyond this untenable conservation that, in the next chapter, we shall discover that the invention that is *anthropogenesis* is in fact always already *zoogenesis*.

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<sup>21</sup> Along with the animal, “primitive” man, for whom “the name has not emerged from the thing” (“Literature,” 322), also finds himself uneasily (non)placed according to this dialectical movement. In this context, see Gayatri Spivak’s reading of Hegel and the native informant in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 37-67.

## 2. Animals in Looking-Glass World

### Fables of Überhumanism and Posthumanism in Heidegger and Nietzsche

“—then you don’t like *all* insects?” the Gnat went on, as quietly as if nothing had happened.

“I like them when they can talk,” Alice said. “None of them ever talk, where *I* come from.”

“What sort of insects do you rejoice in, where *you* come from?” the Gnat inquired.

Lewis Carroll *Through the Looking-Glass*

### Introduction

In *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger sets out on the way of a comparative analysis of three guiding theses: the stone is worldless [*weltlos*], the animal is poor-in-world [*weltarm*], the man is world-forming [*weltbildend*].<sup>22</sup> Here, in exploring how this analysis reveals various differences and similarities between the existential analytic and traditional metaphysics, I aim to demonstrate how the hermeneutic circle functions within Heidegger’s commitment to a “humanism beyond humanism” as outlined in his 1947 paper, “Letter on Humanism.” In this, I argue that Heidegger’s thinking does indeed break with the traditional metaphysical configurations of the human-animal relation. However, insofar as nonhuman animals are unthinkingly reinscribed as essentially undying, his philosophy nonetheless remains ultimately enclosed within a “metaphysical anthropocentrism” which, alongside traditional metaphysics, underwrites the industrialised holocaust of animals under the sign of *Gestell*.

Despite this, I argue in the second half of this chapter that Heidegger’s attempt to “go along” with animals nonetheless better enables us, in turning back, to scent the multiple paths of animals in Nietzsche’s early text “On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense” (1873). Here, I suggest, that what this text offers is a way of thinking our being with others who do not share our language and who are not mere

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<sup>22</sup> In *Of Spirit: On Heidegger and the Question* (1987), Derrida acutely contends that the median character of Heidegger’s animal threatens the order, implementation, and conceptual apparatus of the entire existential analytic. Here, however, I am pursuing a different reading of its ordering dialectic. An earlier version of this chapter appeared in *Humanimalia* 1:2 (Spring) 2010, 46-85.

reflections of ourselves, but without ever imagining the possibility of either consensus or disclosure. In this, I set off—albeit blindly, as we shall see—along a way to a thinking of inhuman genealogies which speak rather of a primordial, machinic being-with in which invention can only ever be a nonhuman monstrosity.

## I. Fables of origin: Animals in the Mirror

Via the work of biologist Hans Driesch and ethologist Jakob von Uexküll, Heidegger argues in the second part of *The Fundamental Concepts* that nonhuman animals are excluded from the *worlding* of world as a necessary result of their “captivation [*Benommenheit*],” which confines them instead within an *environment* (*FCM*, 239). In other words, as far as Heidegger’s animal is concerned, there can be neither anything *beyond*, nor any differentiation *within*, the “disinhibiting ring” which marks the absolute limit of her environmental capture. As a result of this essential undifferentiated absorption [*Eingenommenheit*], an animal can therefore never “have” her own captivation, that is, she can never apprehend her own capture within a set. Because of this, concludes Heidegger, she is therefore “poor-in-world [*weltarm*].”

More importantly for Heidegger, however, is that this conclusion concerning the way of animals provides the scenery against which we might thenceforth disclose the essence of the human: “In the end our ... analysis of captivation as the essence of animality provides as it were a suitable background against which the essence of humanity can now be set off” (282). It would seem then, that the analysis of “the animal’s” way of being is undertaken solely in order that the proper essence of “the human” can be subsequently disclosed through the negation of its negation, that is, through the dialectical disclosing of the essence of *world*. Such a methodology thus presupposes a categorical and teleological human-animal distinction.

The condition of possibility of world for Heidegger, as that which is withheld from nonhuman animals, is the “having” of captivation *as such*, that is, the apprehension of the undisconcealedness of Being *as* undisconcealedness (i.e., of the withdrawal of Being). In other words, the human “is” only in this having of “the ‘as’-structure [*die ‘als’-Struktur*],” which is the condition of the *logos*. This is because it is only in having the “as” that the human is given to apprehend being *as* beings—the

wonder that beings *are* which is the worlding of world—and thus, beyond the captivation of the disinhibiting ring, to perceive itself as *an* individuated being. This apprehension of ontological difference is, moreover, nothing less than the apprehension of *finitude*, of the possibility of impossibility, and thus at once the condition of the Dasein's existential projection of its ownmost being-toward-death [*eigenst Sein zum Tode*].

We can thus see how, in negating the ringed animal as without the revelation of relation and thus poor-in-world, Heidegger is thus free to posit the properly Dasein as that which “is” nearest to Being, and thus reserve for it alone the possibility of authentic existence. It is here then, with the capacity to apprehend something *as* something, that Heidegger draws the abyssal line between the human-Dasein and the animal, one which permits neither the possibility of a human animal nor that of a nonhuman Dasein. For as long as such a line remains unquestioned, Heidegger's discourse (re)turns safely within the metaphysical humanist enclosure.

The nonhuman animal remains, however, and remains a problem. Given the essential withholding of apprehension from the animal, it is clear that the “poverty [*Armut*]” attributed to it by Heidegger can be a “deprivation [*Entbehrung*]” only when viewed from the perspective of the human, and thus, in truth, is neither poverty nor privation. This, as Heidegger himself points out, would appear to disallow the positing of the tripartite thesis from the first, insofar as such an essential characterisation is in fact conceived only in comparison with man and “not drawn from animality itself and maintained within the limits of animality” (270). Curiously, Heidegger does not object to this charge: to imagine otherwise, he says, is perhaps the privilege only of poets (271). Is Heidegger thus staking a claim to philosophical poetry in opposition to the dialectic? Not objecting to the objection, Heidegger rather sets out to “*weaken* [*abschwächen*]” it, to set about “[r]emoving its force [*seine Entkräftung*]” (270). This he does, in fact, by *affirming* it. While the perhaps unassailable charge remains, he argues, it nevertheless “*surely suffices* that ... [it] has led us to our destination in a *practical* fashion” (272, emphasis added). Let us defer our objection, he suggests, because “[i]n spite of everything it has brought us closer ...” (272, emphasis added). We have found our way, in other words, because the essence of animality as captivated and thus poor-in-world—a thesis “which follows only if the animal is regarded in comparison with humanity” (271)—serves us as the “negative” by which our own “positive ... proper essence has constantly emerged in contrast” (272).

There is, however, no talk of sublation, no labour of the negative in what is only—as Heidegger repeatedly makes explicit—a *comparative* examination. It is rather the case, I will argue, that the animal in Heidegger’s discourse is less a negative to be negated than a mirror which reflects only the essence of being-human which being-human itself renders invisible. Within such a mirror “we humans” always already find ourselves, but without ever disclosing—if indeed such a disclosure were possible—the essence of animality.<sup>23</sup>

### **Building frames and booking passage**

As is well known, Heidegger repeatedly and explicitly seeks to position his own discourse on the far side of the closure of metaphysics, and thus, as he makes clear in the “Letter on Humanism” (1947), outside of any traditional humanist expropriation:

Are we really on the right track toward the essence of man as long as we *set him off* as one living creature among others in contrast to plants, beasts, and God? ... [W]e must be clear on this point, that when we do this we abandon man to the essential realm of *animalitas* even if we do not equate him with beasts but attribute a specific difference to him. ... Such positing is the manner of metaphysics. But then the essence of man is too little heeded and *not thought in its origin*, the essential provenance that is always the essential future for historical mankind. Metaphysics thinks of man on the basis of *animalitas* and does not think in the direction of his *humanitas* (“Letter,” 227; my emphasis).

In *The Open: Man and Animal* (2002), philosopher Giorgio Agamben, citing the final sentence above (73), claims that Heidegger has ignored his own prescription—this prescription which for Heidegger is “above and beyond all else” (“Letter,” 227). At first glance, and given what I have argued above, this appears undeniable—Heidegger has indeed set off man in contrast to “beasts.” But this is *not* to say, however, that Heidegger has therefore “abandoned” man to the essential realm of *animalitas*, that is, to the realm of “merely” living creatures. The opposite is in fact the case: Heidegger

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<sup>23</sup> Such captivity is both echoed and complicated by French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s capture of animals in the mirror (stage). See for example “The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I” in Lacan *Écrits: A Selection* trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1995), 1-7. On this, see also Derrida *The Animal*, 119-140, and *Beast*, 97-135.

rather essentially abandons *animalitas* in order to think the essence of man. We ourselves, as Heidegger says, “have also been in view all the time” (*FCM*, 272).

At this point it is helpful to return to Heidegger’s comment which serves as a coda to his analysis of the animal: “In the end [*Am Ende*],” he states, “our earlier analysis of captivation as the essence of animality provides as it were [*gleichsam*] a suitable [*geeignete*] background against which the essence of humanity can now be set off [*abheben*]” (282). Any reading of the Heideggerian animal must return to, and negotiate around, these words, occurring as they do just prior to the first formal interpretation of the “as”-structure. Again, there is, “in the end,” no sublation, no labouring negative, but only the hesitant aestheticism of the suitability or fittingness [*geeignete*] of the background which is—albeit prefaced by the so to speak [*gleichsam*] “innocent” qualification “as it were [*gleichsam*]”—*provided* by the animal.

Against the background of the animal, the setting off of the human is thus doubled. In the first place, the human “stands out,” set off [*abheben*] from a background animality that serves to focus attention whilst harmonising with its object, like the setting which displays a jewel to best effect. In the second, the animal provides the point of departure from which the *Dasein* might set off along the way that is proper to the human. It is, in other words, to take off [*abheben*] from the animal and, in so doing, to withdraw her value [*abheben*] in constituting the proper economy of man. This is therefore to draw a very different kind of line, that of an organisational frame which, like that enclosing a painting, negotiates with both sides in order to establish and delimit its focus. Moreover, as we shall see, this frame is at once a boundary wall, the determined limit of which is rendered invisible by its mirrored surface and which, while appearing to open the space of “the animal,” in fact serves to enclose “the human” within an infinitely regressive image of itself.

Hence, we can begin to understand Heidegger’s insistence that the correctness or otherwise of his claim for an essential poverty on the part of nonhuman animals must nevertheless await the disclosure of the essence of (human) world. It is only then, writes Heidegger, that one might “understand the animal’s not-having of world as a *deprivation after all*” (272).

Heidegger is thus booking a return passage, a reaching back to the animal such as is available *only from within* the human world, and he does so in order to legitimate the posited essence of animality which “founded” that world. It is a turn, that is to say, of and within the hermeneutic circle. We humans have thus been in view



all the time “whether we wanted to be or not, although not in the form of some arbitrary and contingent self-observation or in the form of some traditional definition of man” (272). Here then, in a gesture familiar from *Being and Time*, Heidegger sites his discourse outside of *both* the human sciences (specifically the ethology of Driesch and von Uexküll) *and* traditional metaphysics. Outside, that is, such discourses in which thinking the human is “abandoned” to animal physiology on the one hand and, on the other, outside of a humanist metaphysics in which the reproduction of man endlessly and fallaciously depends upon the exclusion of the nonhuman animal. Heidegger is thus claiming, despite the familiar, all too human attribution of ontological privation common to both the existential and the metaphysical, to have set off along a different way. Whether this in fact brings us any closer to a thinking encounter with animals, however, still remains to be thought.

### **Turning circles with Saint Paul**

This other way of thinking is, of course, the turning of the hermeneutic circle that is the existential analytic itself. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger claims furthermore that this circle of understanding expresses “the existential *fore-structure* of Dasein itself” (195). As a result of its privileged position within the circle, it is thus only the Dasein, of all the beings-in-the-world, which has the “*possibility* of existence, [and thus] has ontological priority over every other entity” (62).

It is this privilege, in other words, which gives to the Dasein alone “a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing” (195). Hence, while a scientific discourse such as biology may indeed comport to entities not itself, when it comes to the Dasein, as the sole being for whom being-in-the-world belongs essentially, an understanding of Being “pertains with equal primordially both to an understanding of something like a ‘world,’ and to the understanding of the Being of those entities which become accessible within the world” (33). We can thus see why, in his subsequent lecture course, Heidegger passes through “the essence of animality” in order to disclose “something like a ‘world,’” and why contemporary biology might provide just that point of departure. “Whenever an ontology takes for its theme entities whose character of Being is other than that of Dasein,” he insists, “it has its own foundation and motivation in Dasein’s own ontical structure, in which a pre-ontological

understanding of Being is comprised as a definite characteristic” (33). The real question of other beings, in other words, is always the Dasein.

In summary therefore, it is the privileged position of the Dasein, as that which “is” nearest to Being, which justifies the understanding of animality on the basis of an understanding of the Dasein. The animal as constituted in biological discourse is in this sense an “empty form” from which its primordial sources have become detached, leaving only “a free-floating thesis” for which the hermeneutic method secures the access to the phenomenon that is its object. Such access, however, serves solely to provide “our [human] *passage* [*Durchgang*] through whatever is prevalently covering it up” (61). Such a hermeneutic turn is thus, as Heidegger reiterates, a turning solely within the human-Dasein: philosophy, he writes, “takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein, which, as an analytic of *existence*, has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*” (62). The biological discourse of animality is thus for Heidegger simply the point of departure—where it arises in comparison to the Dasein and to which it always returns.

The “essence of animality” in *The Fundamental Concepts* is, in other words, the radicalisation of what the Dasein already possesses in, and which is concealed by, the “everyday” *existentiell* discourse of Driesch and Uexküll’s ethology, the necessarily ontical point of departure which provides the passage to an *existential* understanding of the human-Dasein. A passage or a way which, in going along with nonhuman animals, never encounters animals at all.

That nonhuman animals are without the “as”-structure and thus without possibility is simply *assumed* by Heidegger at the very beginning of *Being and Time*, and necessarily so given his thinking on the indissociability of language and Being with the privilege of the Dasein, and thus of the latter’s identity with the human, during this period.<sup>24</sup> Hence, and despite the distance claimed from both the contingency of empiricism and the tradition of metaphysics, Heidegger in *The Fundamental Concepts* must similarly refuse animals entry into the reserve of language that is the preserve of the human. As a result, while passing through the everyday discourses of biology and ethology, he thus grounds his reiteration of exceptionalism on perhaps the most traditional and “common sense” metaphysical

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<sup>24</sup> On this, see Heidegger’s recapitulation in *On the Way to Language*, 30.

definition of all: that nonhuman animals are essentially condemned to the capture of “instinctual drivenness” (*FCM*, 237) due to their lack of (human) language.

Moreover, in that language thus understood is the condition of possibility of the open, Heidegger in fact extends the traditional definition in order to deny nonhuman animals the *world*. Indeed, that Heidegger chooses to illustrate this not with a poet, but with Saint Paul, should certainly give pause to all poor creatures deprived of voice along the way. It is difficult too, not to hear in this silencing Heidegger’s infamous attribution just five years later—in *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (1935)—of an exclusive linguistic privilege, and thus a privileged relation to Being, to those who inhabit the *German* language alone. Here too, “others” are rendered dumb in a further restriction of access to both world and destiny.

### ***Anthropos* as jewel and fable**

In order to better understand the consequences of this anthropocentric (re)turn and, moreover, to think how a revolution of that circle may itself provide a way beyond the humanist enclosure, I will now consider Agamben’s reading of the Heideggerian animal in *The Open* referred to briefly above. A reading which, I suggest, will provide both counterpoint and our own point of departure.

Seeking to problematise Heidegger’s assertion in the “Letter on Humanism” to have moved beyond “the manner of metaphysics,” Agamben’s reading rests upon the claim that Heidegger posits *profound boredom* as “the metaphysical operator in which the passage from poverty in world to world, from animal environment to human world, is realised” (*The Open* 68). This has important consequences for Agamben’s reading. Given that profound boredom marks the evolutionary and teleological *passage* from the animal to the Dasein, it can only be that the “jewel set at the center of the human world and its *Lichtung* [clearing] is nothing but animal captivation; the wonder ‘that beings *are*’ is nothing but the grasping of the ‘essential disruption’ that occurs in the living being from its being exposed in a nonrevelation” (68). As a result, he insists, the “irresolvable struggle between unconcealedness and concealedness, between disconcealment and concealment, which defines the human world, is the internal struggle between man and animal” (69). Thus, Agamben is compelled to ask, if humanity comes to be only through “a suspension of animality” which must “keep

itself open to the closedness of animality,” then how exactly does Heidegger’s attempt “to grasp the ‘existing essence of man’ escape the metaphysical primacy of *animalitas*?” (73).

In reaching this conclusion, however, there occurs in Agamben’s reading a necessary shifting of terms, a passage-over that is a passing-onto which occurs precisely at the moment when Agamben himself introduces the notion of *passage*. Immediately following the description of profound boredom as “the metaphysical operator” in which is realised the passage from animal environment to human world, Agamben asserts that “at issue here is nothing less than anthropogenesis, the becoming Da-sein of living man” (68). In that it is only in and through profound boredom that the human Dasein can apprehend the wonder “that beings *are*,” it is indeed the case that the “having” of captivation *as such* is “nothing less than anthropogenesis, the becoming Da-sein.” However, as we shall see, this is *not*, and nor can it ever be, the *becoming* “of living man” in the sense of the *passage* from the “merely” living to the properly human-Dasein—a passage which thus passes over the nonlocalisable moment between the still-animal and the already-Dasein, and between the no longer animal and the not yet human.

In order to better understand the stakes of Agamben’s reading, it is first of all necessary to once again recall those two dominant configurations of the human-animal relation. In the first, as we have seen, the production of the human depends upon the death or nonexistence of the animal (as exemplified by Blanchot’s position), whereas in the second, the human depends upon a repeated overcoming of his or her own animality. Here, I will argue, Heidegger’s explicit attempt to think *humanitas* outside of any such traditional metaphysical definition is taken by Agamben and unwittingly re-placed within the second configuration. This is an economy, moreover, which is not only common to what Agamben terms the modern anthropological machine, but is also one which Agamben’s own notion of a sacred community prior to the positing of identity is ultimately unable to escape.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> The modern “anthropological machine” which produces “bare life” by “excluding as not (yet) human an already human being from itself, that is, by animalising the human, by isolating the nonhuman within the human ... the animal separated within the human body itself” (*The Open*, 37), clearly depends upon this second configuration. Agamben’s utopian community prior to identity, meanwhile, in simply inverting the dystopian machinic production of bare life, necessarily remains caught within the same economy. On this, see Andrew Benjamin “Particularity and Exceptions: On Jews and Animals.”

Becoming-Dasein, that is, the Dasein “thought in its origin,” remains for Heidegger, I have argued, a thinking solely in the direction of *humanitas* insofar as the background from which he “sets off” is not that which is preserved and annihilated in the animal’s being raised up to the human, nor is it that which grounds the Dasein like its shadow. Rather, it is the case that such a setting-off marks out Heidegger’s discourse of anthropogenesis as a speculative thesis, one which offers a fantastic hypothesis or, “*as [if] it were,*” a *fable*. A fable, moreover, which, true to the form, has already sacrificed the animal to its very taking place.

Insofar as nonhuman animals are captivated [*benommen*], Heidegger writes, the possibility of apprehending something *as* something is therefore *withheld* [*genommen*]. This possibility, moreover, is not merely withheld in the historically contingent here and now, but is rather “withheld in the sense that such a possibility is ‘not given at all’” (*FCM*, 247). Given this *a priori* withholding of the “*as*”-structure, that which is most proper to the nonhuman animal is her inability to disclose the undisconcealed *as* undisconcealed, and at once therefore, neither can she ever apprehend *concealedness* which, insofar as it presupposes its opposite, remains *essentially* unavailable. As a result, an animal can never *become* the Dasein—the passage *between* animal and human is always already impossible.

Hence, whereas for Agamben animality abruptly comes to *signify* concealedness, and which makes of the struggle between unconcealedness and concealedness the struggle between human and nonhuman animal, in fact the latter can be positioned at neither pole. Without relation, there can be no dialectical teleology, no possible negation of the negation of the animal. Instead, there is only an abyssal rupture that marks *out* “the animal” at the limit of thinking, of thinking the Dasein, and of thinking finitude. Thus, while Agamben’s reading of becoming-Dasein as the bridge from animal to human makes of Heidegger’s discourse a reiteration of the aporetic site of the fault-line *between* the animal and the human—a boundary which, as Agamben himself makes clear, “cannot be mended from either side” (*The Open*, 36)—, in fact there can be no crossing, no passage, and therefore no irresolvable conflict. There is, in short, no *between* of the animal and the human.

Without relation, nonhuman animals remain for Heidegger absolutely other, beyond that which gives itself as food for thought and, as such, just as essentially excluded from concealment as they are from propriety and authenticity. Hence, it is rather the case that, in thinking the “having” of captivity, thinking *humanitas* is

obtained in *thought* by the human in order to *think* the human-Dasein or, more precisely, to think the becoming of the human-Dasein. In other words, the reiterated yet irresolvable struggle between concealment and disconcealment, ever denied to “the animal,” is only the ontological struggle between improper “*being*-Dasein” and proper “*becoming*-Dasein.” A struggle, that is, between being-Dasein understood in the sense of the specifically human undisconcealed absorption that is being-there as facticity [*Faktizität*] and falling [*Verfallen*], and becoming-Dasein in the taking place of the *possibility* of the human-Dasein’s resolute openness in Being-toward-death. This is because it is the taking place of the “having” of the “as” in profound boredom which is the condition for, and which always already escapes in, the uncanny experience of anxiety in which the Dasein is brought “back from its absorption in the ‘world’” (*Being and Time* 233). It is only in and as this shattering experience, writes Heidegger, that the Dasein finds itself “*face to face* with the ‘nothing’ of the possible impossibility of its existence,” carried into the authenticity of its ownmost [*eigenst*] Dasein in and as this disclosure of “uttermost possibility” (310-11).

On the one hand then, there is the turbulent sham of “untruth” (*Unwahrheit*) which brings “tranquillised self-assurance—‘Being-at-home,’ with all its obviousness—into the average everydayness of Dasein” (223, 264, 233). On the other, there is the “truth” of existential projection in and as which, “[i]n the happening of uncanniness, beings as a whole open themselves up” (*Introduction to Metaphysics*, 178).

## **Becoming and bodying**

Nonhuman animals, it is clear, *essentially* have no place in this struggle. Rather than a conflict between *humanitas* and *animalitas*, Heidegger puts forward a thesis which for him can only ever concern an entirely human struggle. While Agamben accurately describes the becoming-Dasein in the having of captivity, what he thenceforth shifts or *passes on* or *over* to the animal is the blindness of the everyday, the undisclosed in facticity and falling. The “absorption in itself [*Eingenommenheit in sich*]” of animal captivity can never be the “being absorbed in the world [*Sinne des Aufgehens in der Welt*]” of the Dasein, in that such captive everydayness of the latter “Being alongside” presupposes the very structure of significance [*Bedeutsamkeit*] *a priori* denied to

nonhuman animals. What then, is left for “the animal”? It can only be an all too human dissolution within the undifferentiation of thoughtless, instinctive reaction.

Whereas Agamben wishes to “restore to the closed, to the earth, and to *lēthē* their proper name of ‘animal’ and ‘simply living being’” (*The Open*, 73), in fact the apprehension of the closed or the earth is rather *the sense of that which exceeds sense*. What gives the Dasein to apprehend that beings *are*, that is, is their appearing *as* closed in the blunt materiality of their withdrawal.<sup>26</sup> In other words, what have being named closed, earth, and *lēthē* constitute in their blunt materiality the taking place of beings *as* such, and which can be apprehended only *as* meaning without sense (content) and *as* sense (sensibility) without meaning. In this affective manifestness [*Offenbarkeit*] *as* without sense, therefore, the Dasein comes to be always already *in* language. *Becoming-Dasein thus remarks the taking place of the “as” which has always already escaped*. When beings are apprehended *as* beings, the sense of that which withdraws has necessarily already *taken* place, that is, the withdrawal of meaning has already become meaningful in its being apprehended, and in the subsequent wonder of the fact that beings *are* we are thus already anxiously constituted within infinitely entangled structures of meaning.<sup>27</sup>

Such a withdrawal of meaning, therefore, is neither meaningless nor transcendental, but is rather that which exceeds every structure of meaning upon which nevertheless depends its affective manifestness. The uncanny disposition that is its apprehension is, in other words, necessarily a singular, historically situated event. We get some sense of this in Heidegger’s notion of “mood [*die Stimmung*]” or, more precisely, “attunement [*die Gestimmtheit*]” which, in the decade following *Being and Time*, acquires a robust materiality beyond any reduction to the organismic. Every feeling, Heidegger thus affirms in the first Nietzsche lecture, “is an embodiment attuned in this or that way, a mood that embodies in this or that way” (*Nietzsche*, I:100). Every attunement, moreover,

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<sup>26</sup> I have chosen the phrase “blunt materiality” rather than “brute materiality” both because it is generally free from an overdetermined notion of animality, and in order to better foreground the impersonal force of matter.

<sup>27</sup> In his conclusion, Agamben claims that two possible Heideggerian “scenarios” remain. The first involves the governance of man’s concealedness (for Agamben, his animality) by means of technology. In the second, man “appropriates his own concealedness, his own animality, which neither remains hidden nor is made an object of mastery, but is thought as such, as pure abandonment” (*The Open*, 80). In the last section of this chapter and throughout the next, I argue that to think the escape of the taking place of being as such, that is, of the affective manifestness of the “as without sense,” is indeed to think just such unmasterable abandonment.

always just as essentially has a feeling for beings as a whole, every bodily state involves some way in which the things around us and the people with us lay a claim on us or do not do so. ... Mood is precisely the basic way in which we are *outside* ourselves. But that is the way we are essentially and constantly (99).

In the third of the Nietzsche lectures two years later, Heidegger further clarifies this notion with the move from *embodiment* [*das Leiben*] to that of *bodying* [*das Leibende*]. This shift serves to highlight that “the body [*der Leib*]” never refers to its apparent “encapsulation” in the “physical mass [*Körper*],” but rather to “a stream of life” which “is transmission and passage at the same time” (*Nietzsche*, III:79). *Bodying*, in other words, is never that of a substantial body that is *thence* contingently situated, but rather “is” the laying claim of sense in infinite singularity. In this way, *bodying* is an enacting *as* bodily being. Hence it becomes possible to reread the indented citation thus: every laying claim of *sense*, every wash and tunnel, every drift and detain that is at once passage and transmission in both directions, is a *bodying* in this or that way, a being-outside that singularly *bodies*.

I will return to this notion of *bodying* later, the materialisation of which puts to work a machinery of materiality in order to reproduce an impossible contour. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to recall that the attunement of an essential and constant *bodying* *is* relation: being-exposed rather than a being that exposes itself. What the *Dasein*, in resolute being-towards-death, must ever again keep itself open to is not, as Agamben claims, the closedness of animality, but rather to a letting lie before in which being *as such* comes to withdraw from sense. It is this alone which remains to interrupt the capture of the closedness of the everyday, which remains to disrupt the disinhibiting ring of “the *they* [*das Man*].”

### **Heidegger’s anthropomagical mirror**

In *The Fundamental Concepts as in Being and Time*, Heidegger, I have argued, does not in fact think *animals* at all. Rather, “in the end,” Heidegger offers only an extended animal *fable*, a fabulous sacrificial myth that, *as (if) it were* and in the background, sets off what is (arguably) most proper to *man*, that of his own very *origin*. In our



questioning, Heidegger writes, we always and inevitably “end up talking as if that which the animal relates to and the manner in which it does so were some being” (*FCM*, 255). In fact, it is not *some* being, but rather, and only, *human* being: none other than the Dasein “we” always already are. “We” end up, in other words, talking about a nonhuman animal *as if* she were a *human* animal, that is to say, “we” anthropomorphise her, and in this she is thus transformed or translated into the form of a *fable* (in this seminar, one does well to remember that Heidegger is explicitly putting forward a *thesis*, that is, putting something forward *for the sake of argument*, something Heidegger very rarely does, as Derrida has pointed out).

Traditionally dealing with origins, the generic fable is, after all and by definition, an anthropomorphic mirror in which, reflected in an exemplary animal caricature, “we” humans are expected to recognise our ownmost proper mode of being. Here then, and for the sake of argument, Heidegger is proffering a fabulous drama, one in which is staged, as if in a mirror, the rigorously anthropocentric struggle between *being* that Dasein which has its *demise* [*ableben*] and *becoming* that Dasein which has *dying* for its way of Being (*Being and Time*, 291). In another sense, however, it is at the same time an *anti-fable*, in that, given the imperative of an always already becoming again that is the gift of finitude, there can be no site nor sight of the Dasein’s phylogenetic Origin. Indeed, as Heidegger is no doubt aware, a telling anthropogenesis can never be a tale of the Origin of the Species, which would inevitably reiterate its *auto-Destruktion* along that doubly “unmendable” fault-line.

An obvious question thus remains: “who,” or “what,” comes to be human? It cannot be a nonhuman animal, nor indeed any other unworlding being, essentially denied as they are access to the “as.” There “is,” therefore, *no* Origin. Rather, the human animal alone always already comes to be following what Blanchot calls the deluge of language, that is to say, of being *as* such. “The human,” in other words, comes to be, and is called to Being, by being always already in language.

In short then, human animals *are* thus always already following the unsitableness of the originary fall into the “as”-structure. We thus find ourselves left once more with “the “question of the animal.” Following Heidegger, insofar as they lack even the possibility of impossibility, nonhuman animals thus find themselves once again nonplaced uncannily both before and after the world, or at least before and after its *worlding*.

Here, however, things become slightly more complicated. Given all this, and given the undifferentiated absorption that is instinctive reaction, how can we make sense of the fact that, according to Heidegger, “[t]he animal’s *way of being*, which we call ‘*life*,’ is *not without access* to what is around it and about it” (FCM, 198)? In that for Heidegger such a “not without access [*nicht zugangslos*]” can never be access to being as such, it soon becomes clear that “not without access” can only be a “seeming to have access” understood as a “not-having-in-the-mode-of-having.” It remains essentially the case, Heidegger insists, that the animal only “appears as a living being [*als seiendes Lebewesen vorkommt*]” (198), and it is this mere “seeming *like*” or “appearing *as*” which gives rise to the mistaken claim that nonhuman animals too “have” the “as.” And indeed, this reference to the animal appearing *as* [*als*] a living being is at once to explicate that very appearing: for Heidegger, both the appearing and the subsequent claim are pure anthropomorphisms, a necessarily human “talking as if” in which each and every other animal is transformed into yet one more anthropomagical mirror.

Unable to differentiate beings *as* beings, nonhuman animals thus only appear *as* living beings as a *consequence* of one exceptional animal’s “having” the “as”-structure; an exclusive property which subsequently reduces every other being-(not)-in-the-world to a dependence upon the existence of the human. Hence, one can now better understand Heidegger’s deferral of the disclosure of the essence of animality as something available *only* from within the *human* world. Other than as a ghosted outline therefore, a phantom individuation through the looking glass that is the human-Dasein, all other beings remain essentially absorbed in the anonymous impersonal night of the *es gibt*.

### **Humanism beyond humanism**

Here, at last, we find ourselves in a position from which we can better understand the relation between Heidegger’s “decentred exceptionalism” and the tradition of metaphysical humanism it claims to move beyond. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Heidegger’s “Letter on Humanism” will provide the final key.

On one side, the radical antihumanism of the decentred subject is indeed, and contrary to Agamben’s argument, other to the traditional metaphysical definitions of

the human. At the same time, however, its decentring of the exclusively *human* subject serves only to introduce the higher, *überhumanism* which Heidegger claims in the “Letter” is to be found within the existential analytic, the “sole implication” of which—

is that the highest determinations of the essence of man in humanism still do not realise the proper dignity of man. To that extent the thinking in *Being and Time* is against humanism. ... [But] Humanism is opposed because it does not *set* [my emphasis] the *humanitas* of man high enough (233-4).

According to this *überhumanism* there can be no possibility of an originary human-animal *Mitsein*, in that it is only ever “the human” which *constitutes* (“subsequent” to its appearing) nonhuman beings *as* beings, and in this sense the nonhuman animal must thus always *come after* the human. Before the human, in other words, there is mere “living,” but not “living *be-ing*” as such.

Here then, Heidegger does indeed displace nonhuman animals outside of the humanist teleology of traditional metaphysics which, insofar as “the human” depends upon the exclusion of its “animalistic ground,” marks down every nonhuman animal as incomplete and subhuman. At the same time, however, he inscribes an *überhumanist* exceptionalism in its place. This is because, insofar as *being* comes to be *as such* only in and as the human, thereby always already excluding the possibility of a founding sublation of animal negativity, the *constitution* of nonhuman animals thereafter depends upon the human. Hence, while it is a radical reversal of the dependence-exclusion of the metaphysical humanist tradition, it is one which nevertheless remains within its economy—as if in a mirror. Thus, in this telling of such a fabulous tale, nonhuman animals come to be always and only as spectral beings-for-man.<sup>28</sup> Invoked from the deepest of depths, in other words, Heidegger’s animals are raised up to a ghostly appearance and allotted, “so to speak [*gleichsam*],” a brief graceless period before “disappearing” once again into the undifferentiation of both the general noun and, for the most part, the mass term “meat.”

Such an *überhumanist a priori* refusal of thinking animals, in every sense, has, in going along with traditional metaphysics in denying death to nonhuman beings, far-

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<sup>28</sup> It is not insignificant that Aristotle in the *Politics* infers the new Western concept of “just war” from the condition that nonhuman animals are solely “beings-for-man.” In the same context, for Stoics such as Chrysippus all nonhuman animals are also only beings-for-man, from the mice who ensure humans put their things away, to the pigs whose souls serve only to keep them fresh to eat.

reaching and murderous consequences. Most important here is that, for Heidegger's resolution, as for both Blanchot and Hegel and in common with Christian and Enlightenment tradition, *nonhuman animals have no death, no possibility, and no meaning*. They are, in other words, exscribed therein, written out in an all too human, all too familiar fashion as soulless mechanisms working only until they run, or are ran, down (although, it should be noted, the same tradition, which includes Marx, claims that nonhuman animals are also ontologically incapable of "work"). In reiterating the undying *figure* central to the two dominant configurations of metaphysics, Heidegger thus reiterates too the hubris of a human exceptionalism which, based upon the surety of absolute superiority, sanctions our doing whatever "we" like to other animals.

Such putatively posthumanist thinking therefore, in its restaging of the eternal animal predicated upon the lack of language, in fact reproduces a *symbolic* economy serving the ends of capitalist instrumentalisation. It ensures, in other words, that the singular deaths of nonhuman animals, that is, *this* death of *this* (farm, laboratory, or feral) animal, are considered at best epiphenomenal—rendered both symbolically and literally as a fortuitous by-product—and, at worst, a simple impossibility, that is to say, such deaths are without meaning and thus unthinkable. In this sense, the divergent philosophies of Blanchot and Heidegger come together to further underwrite the *material* global practice of systematic violence and mass murder on a truly unthinkable scale. In figuring "the animal" as undying, that is, their discourse mimetically reproduces as "natural" the instrumental reduction of nonhuman animals to a state of "interminable survival" that is at once a daily zootechnical genocide.<sup>29</sup> They serve, in other words, to further naturalise capital's waging of a massively unequal war on animals.

### **On the far side of the looking-glass**

This, however, is not necessarily the end of Heidegger's "just so" story. In a coda to this conclusion which will serve too as an introduction to the engagement with Nietzsche's animals in the second half of this chapter, we find that, insofar as

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<sup>29</sup> As Derrida writes, the contemporary maltreatment of nonhuman animals occurs "through the organisation and exploitation of an artificial, infernal, virtually interminable survival, in conditions that previous generations would have judged monstrous" (*The Animal*, 26).

nonhuman animals remain corralled within the Dasein's reflection, they necessarily remain unthought. In other words, nonhuman animals inevitably *remain*, and they remain too for Heidegger whose rigour will not allow his reservation to remain unspoken.

The difficulty of the problem lies in the fact that in our questioning we always and inevitably interpret the poverty in world and the peculiar encirclement proper to the animal in such a way that we end up talking as if that which the animal relates to and the manner in which it does so were some being, and as if the relation involved were an ontological relation that is manifest to the animal. The fact that this is not the case compels us to the thesis [*nötigt zu der These*] that the *essence of life is accessible only through a destructive observation* [*Wesen des Lebens nur im Sinne einer abbauenden Betrachtung zugänglich ist*], which does not mean that life is something inferior or that it is at a lower level in comparison with human Dasein. On the contrary, life is a domain which possesses a wealth of being-open [*Offenseins*], of which the human world may know nothing at all (*FCM*, 255; trans. modified).

It remains the case then, beyond what is yet one more anthropocentric mirror—beyond, that is, this “fact” which compels Heidegger to speculate—, that this necessarily destructive observing with and to which the animal is sacrificed nonetheless reserves for nonhuman animals, on the far side of the abyssal rupture, the possibility of an unknown and unknowing being-open which remains to be differently thought. Indeed, it is with this in mind that I now turn to Nietzsche, and in particular to the inseparable, nonanthropocentric notions of *sense* and *memory*.

## II. Fables without Origin: Animals in the World

As we have seen then, it is indeed the case that Heidegger, as Derrida suggests, never seriously envisages the possibility of a “*Mitsein* with” the nonhuman animal—a remark which, I have argued, applies equally well to Blanchot. By turning to Nietzsche, however, a turning which retains the senses of both circle and dialogue, we are able to gain a glimpse of what it might mean to think the multiple ways of being-animal and the destructive observation *together*, rather than as mutually exclusive conditions.<sup>30</sup> Such a thinking together, however, requires that the deaths of nonhuman animals no longer be effaced. Instead, it becomes necessary to engage in thinking encounters shared between animals necessarily thrown in the world *in and of language*.

This is not to suggest, however, a (slightly or greatly) more inclusive, yet nevertheless homogeneous, category of beings. Any such delimitation would necessarily remain dependent upon that which it excludes, and would, as a result, already be undone by the nonlocalisable moment of its fracture or fault-line. In fact, the opposite is the case. Just as it is not possible to efface the threshold of nonhuman-human difference by “simply” placing (and thus excluding) animals as “before” the taking place of language according to some kind of genetic, evolutionary timescale, neither is it possible, any more than it is advisable, to evade or to efface differences *between* animals, be they human and/or nonhuman, in the sharing of that very taking place in and of language.

A “body,” as Heidegger argues, is never that which subsequently encounters the world but rather, in its attunedness that is the essential and constant laying claim of sense, “is” a being-outside that singularly *bodies*. In this, I will argue, *every* so-called body, whether it is “one” we commonly call “animal” or “human” (or rather neither and both), is abysmally situated in relation. Moreover, in being exposed together across sense, meaning and world, it is only by way of the essential indiscernability—the “systematic madness”—of one to an other that an “I” might ever again come to be.

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<sup>30</sup> The huge nonhuman animal population of Nietzsche’s texts, all those gnats, spiders and worms, the entire bestiary that attends Zarathustra’s under-going, the birds that soar above and the blond beast that stalks throughout, has inspired an equally huge variety of interpretations. Notable examples include Heidegger’s reading of “Zarathustra’s Animals” in *Nietzsche II*; Margot Norris *Beasts of the Modern Imagination: Darwin, Nietzsche, Kafka, Ernst, and Lawrence* (1985); Vanessa Lemm *Nietzsche’s Animal Philosophy* (2009); and Christa D. Acampora & Ralph Acampora, eds. *A Nietzschean Bestiary: Becoming Animal Beyond Docile and Brutal* (2004).

## Curative blinding

Moving through the differences and similarities of the relation between animal and human being in Nietzsche's well-known but vertiginously productive 1873 essay, "On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense [*Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne*]" (henceforth cited as *TL*), we soon discover that, like Blanchot, Nietzsche calls "image" that originary forgetting which marks the having taken-place of language. Nietzsche's "image," however, is explicitly *nonanthropocentric*, in that "language" must be understood here as incorporating all production of *sense*. The notion of language, that is to say, must be extended to include the *tropological* functioning of perception and affection. The movement of sensation is, in other words, a transference or, better, a *translation* [*übertragung*] within a *nonnecessary*—i.e., creative or aesthetic—relationship.

"To begin with," writes Nietzsche, "a nerve stimulus is transferred [*übertragen*] into an image [*Bild*]" (82). In this, and right at the beginning, Nietzsche thus makes clear that "image" refers neither solely to *human* perception nor solely to *visual* perception. Rather, any and all perception and affection, any filtering of information whatsoever, is already a produced image, that is, always a *translation*.<sup>31</sup> Such is the image that "is" the touch of the sun's warmth, that "is" the smell of honey, or that "is" the sound of thunder, and so on. Given that any such moment or movement of translation necessitates an *overleaping* [*überspringen*] from one sphere into a second, absolutely heterogeneous sphere, every image is therefore a "perceptual metaphor [*die anschaulichen Metaphern*]," image being the *vehicle* of the stimuli's *tenor*.

More than this, however, the inescapability of this discontinuity of domains makes every perceptual metaphor necessarily inadequate, "a *stammering* translation into a completely foreign tongue" (86). The image is, in other words, a deciphering and at once a ciphering which cannot help but truncate, mutilate, and make monstrous. Nothing less than a material laying claim *in* and *as* which a body comes to be, the sense-image is thus a vehicle ever lost to an errant transmission, to *dissemination*.

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<sup>31</sup> In this context, see also Jakob von Uexküll *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans with A Theory of Meaning* trans. Joseph D. O'Neil (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 147ff.

At once then, living beings possess only discontinuous metaphors *of* physical responses, responses which themselves mark the taking place of material encounters. Hence, in coming to *be* only in and *as* a metaphorical vehicle always radically divided from the originary being-with of an encounter, an encounter which can neither be perceived nor known nor re-presented, it thus follows that the Kantian “thing in itself,” described by Nietzsche as “what the pure truth, apart from any of its consequences, would be” (82), is necessarily an illusion.<sup>32</sup> Every image then, every sense by which being is outside itself, is thus not only a metaphor, but also always already an *abuse* of metaphor in that its analogy remains necessarily incomplete. For Nietzsche therefore, language in its broadest sense is the operation of *catachresis*.<sup>33</sup>

Never in a relation to or of truth, the sense-image is therefore, and “at most,” “an *aesthetic* relation or disposition [*ein ästhetisches Verhalten*]” (86). As well as deconstructing the Platonic distinction between the sensible [*aisthēton*] and the intelligible [*noēton*], such aesthetic relating that is the production of sense is never, given the impossibility of independently existing entities, that of a subject-object relation. Furthermore, given that this being-disposed-outside that is to be attuned to a condition is the aesthetic *production* of sense, it follows that that which appears to us simply as “our” body, that is, the sense *of* a body, as well as the sense *of* the self, of self-awareness, is necessarily founded upon an *a priori* infolding of the outside which already interrupts any such delimitation.

In other words, every passion, being a moment and movement of translation, is thus at once an act of interpretation, just as every action is at once dependent upon a passive infolding of externality. The ek-static production of sense is thus irreducible to the modern Cartesian notion of egological “consciousness” and at once divested of both anthropocentric and organismic restriction. Every nonhuman animal too is first of

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<sup>32</sup> See also *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I:13.

<sup>33</sup> On metaphor in Nietzsche, important texts include Sarah Kofman’s now canonical *Nietzsche and Metaphor* (1972); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe *The Subject of Philosophy* (1979); and Andrzej Warminski’s “Prefatory Postscript: Interpretation and Reading” in *Readings in Interpretation: Hölderlin, Hegel, Heidegger* (1987). For texts which take “On Truth and Lie” as their focus, see also Paul de Man “Rhetoric of Tropes (Nietzsche)” in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust* (1979) and “Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric” in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984); Warminski “Towards a Fabulous Reading: Nietzsche’s ‘On Truth and Lie in the Extra-Moral Sense’” (1991); and Jean-Luc Nancy “‘Our Probité’ On Truth in the Moral Sense in Nietzsche” (1983). Finally, it is necessary to include here Jacques Derrida’s “White Mythology” in *Margins of Philosophy* (1972) which, while reading “On Truth and Lie” only indirectly, as Warminski points out, it nevertheless remains one of its most far-reaching readings.



all being outside itself, and thus it necessarily follows, and as Nietzsche insists, that *all* animals come to their senses only in and as metaphoric perceptions.

Furthermore, in focussing on the *tropology* of sense, and hence of a technics *at* and *as* the origin of life in contrast to both biologism and vitalism, the self-proclaimed last of the Stoics (meaning that henceforth there can be no more) irredeemably fractures any secure distinction between the “natural” and the “artificial.” Rather, Nietzsche discloses the dark machinations of power that blind us to even the most transparent perception. In describing the movement of translation in *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), Nietzsche writes of a kind of inverse blinding in which “the bright image projections [are] ... as it were, luminous spots to cure eyes damaged by the gruesome night” (67). In this way, he gives us to think ourselves, *avant la lettre*, in the sightlessness of Heidegger’s captivated animal, essentially blind when faced with beings we can never apprehend as such. Moreover, in following the traces of Nietzsche’s text it soon becomes clear that any attempt at continuing to draw such a bold (Aristotelian, Cartesian and Heideggerian) dividing line between an “animal” reaction and a “human” response is ultimately untenable.<sup>34</sup>

This blinding, deafening, benumbing production of perceptual metaphors necessarily places “us”—i.e., “us” beings that translate stimuli into images—always already “in” language. We are, in and as the transfer—and *thus in and as existence itself*—already in and as *trope*, inhabiting and being-inhabited by machines for generating meaning. In this, every living being, nonhuman or human, neither or both, is a *subject*: “a nonexistence” into whose emptiness, to paraphrase Michel Foucault, comes the unending outpouring of language.<sup>35</sup>

Obviously, such practices of sense-production are *not*, or not only, language in the narrow sense of the written and spoken word. Nor is it the case, as we will see, that the image is a necessarily intermediate stage between nerve stimulus and intelligible word-concept. It is not the case, that is to say, that the image is *not yet*

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<sup>34</sup> Also see *The Gay Science*, §333. Derrida seeks throughout his writings to deconstruct this traditional distinction which, from Aristotle onwards, has been employed to reduce “animality” to a mechanical instinct in opposition to which the would-be autonomous human response can thence be constituted. Thus animals are posited as locked within an environment within which they are instinctively conditioned to read, yet without ever responding to beings *as* beings. Condemned in this way to perception without cognition, nonhuman animals are therefore excluded as beings without language. In this context too, see Bruno Latour’s deconstruction of the division between facts and values corresponding to the modernist Constitution which renders incommensurable the houses of (nonhuman) Nature and (human) Culture in “A New Separation of Powers” in *Politics of Nature*, 91-127.

<sup>35</sup> Michel Foucault *Essential Works 2: Aesthetics*, 148.

“language proper,” lacking only its teleological fulfilment.<sup>36</sup> As a result, and without denying differences, Nietzsche neither places “the animal” in a median position between non-life (entities which do not translate stimuli into imagery) and being-human (or being-Dasein), nor does he mark out animals for an exclusion predicated upon their death or overcoming which would therefore prohibit the possibility of an animal-human *Mitsein*.

### ***Eccum sic, absolutely***

Despite Heidegger’s refusal of language as such to nonhuman animals, it is nevertheless here, in terms of the metaphorical “image,” that his writings and, after him, those of Jacques Derrida, enable us to better understand what is at stake in its disposition. For Nietzsche, as we have seen, the image is a truncated translation of a response marking a material encounter. The image that remarks every perception is thus always an inadequate interpretation *of a relation*. Given this, and as will become increasingly clear, it can only be that the experience which Nietzsche calls the “first” image—a “unique and entirely individual original experience” which, being “without equals,” is thus “able to elude all classification” (*TL*, 83, 84-5)—is the perception of a *singularity*. Never a sense *of* the impossible thing-in-itself, the experience that is the “first” image is the perception of being *as such*: the “entirely individual original experience” that is the *immediate* perception of *this* uniquely situated relation of being. The “as” of “as such” here marks the excessive and discontinuous transport of metaphor, the discontinuous aesthetic (non)relation that *remarks* our exposure *such* that it is only *as* it is.

In other words, the *as such* “is” the moment and movement of language “itself”: the posit(ion)ing being and being posit(ion)ed of and in language. In *The Coming Community* (1990), Giorgio Agamben describes the event of singularity as follows:

I am never *this* or *that* [substance], but always *such*, *thus*. *Eccum sic*: absolutely. Not possession but limit, not presupposition but exposure. ... Whereas real predicates express relationships within language, exposure is

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<sup>36</sup> Hence it is in no way an attempt to attribute degrees of *human* language to *nonhuman* animals, which would be to reiterate precisely the kind of calculated hierarchical thinking in which, given that the criteria is “which animals are the most human?,” the human will always come out on top, followed by a descending scale of (human) value. It is just such a thinking to which Donna Haraway ultimately falls prey in *When Species Meet*, cf. 236f.

pure relationship with language itself, with its taking-place. It is what happens to something (or more precisely, to the taking-place of something) by the very fact of being in relation to language, the fact of being-called [into language]. ... Existence as exposure is the being-*as* of a *such*. ... The *such* does not presuppose the *as*; it exposes it, it is its taking-place. ... The *as* does not suppose the *such*; it is its exposure, its being pure exteriority (97-8).

In order to better understand this notion of the “first” image as the possibility of immediate perception as such, it is necessary to read in Nietzsche’s text a grammar marked not by the will, but by a primordial passivity which contaminates all activity. In this, the unique, individual and original relation that is the singularity of the *as* such “is” the *taking place* of language. A taking place which is, as we saw with the apprehension of the closed or the earth in Heidegger, the singular laying claim of blunt materiality which withdraws in the relation that “is” being as such.

This “original” relation, however, can never be *perceived* as such, that is, it can never be the translative production of an image, insofar as it is precisely this immediate relation which must escape in the translation into the discontinuous domain that is its interpretation, its *sense*. The X of the original individual “acquaintance” always remains, as Nietzsche writes, “inaccessible and undefinable for us” (83). In short, the image that is to perceive can only ever mark the escape of the originary individual relation as such in its being-sensed, the translation having always already taken place *of* and *in* language.<sup>37</sup>

The word or concept “language” presents something of a problem here, however. Inevitably carrying its burdensome anthropocentric history before it, it tends unwittingly to limit its recall to the verbal, and thus to an exceptionalism which language here serves to put out of the question. The petrified anthropo-logic that inheres in the term “language,” in other words, elides the *sense* of nonhuman animals. For this reason, I suggest that the originary relation of being as such is perhaps better understood simply as that in which the transfer of *sense* can take place. In this, the open that “is” being as such is precisely the *taking place* of the encounter of *sense* which escapes in its necessary translation, a moment and a movement which, in and as perception, has always already *taken place*. Here, “sense” is chosen insofar as it

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<sup>37</sup> On the unsublatable excess of the always already (no) more “example of example” that disarticulates Hegel’s reading of sense-certainty, see Andrzej Warminski’s “Reading for Example: ‘Sense-Certainty’ in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*” in *Diacritics* 11 (1981), 83-96.

retains, across the discrete domains of translation marked by *sens* and *Sinn*, its irreducibility to either the sensible or the intelligible. Rather, each always invests the other: entangled (common and uncommon) sense and sensibility, meanings without sense and sense without meaning. *Sense* [*Le sens*] is thus, as Jean-Luc Nancy writes,

*the element in which there can be* significations, interpretations, representations ... it is the regime of their presentation, and it is the limit of their sense [*sens*] ... Our world is a world presented as a world of sense [*monde de sens*] before and beyond any constituted meaning [*sens constitué*] (*L'oubli de la philosophie*, 90-1).

*Sense* thus carries an imbrication of the material and the semiotic that always exceeds any reduction to the words spoken by human animals alone. The taking place of sense is at once the opening *of* and *as* language, and an opening *to* a necessary movement which, in the proximal distancing of the “as,” installs *technicity* as and at the origin of sense. It is this, as we shall see, which renders untenable any further recourse to the myth of a “natural” pathic (and telepathic) animal communication, and which ultimately renders unacceptable the murderous ideology of the undying animal.

### **Zoogenesis (1): the whirl of technological being**

Translation having always already taken place, this necessary falling away into the metaphoricity of sense—a fall which is also a surfacing, a coming to one’s senses and thence to one’s “self”—thus gives us to understand a “having” of the “as”-structure common to all perception, rather than being the exclusive property of the Dasein. Metaphor being, by definition, the taking of something *as* something else.

The “first” image to which Nietzsche draws our attention, the sense *of* this singular being as such, must thus be read as the coming to be that is the *remarking* of the taking place of the “as” which has always already escaped. Here, it is necessary to understand that such numerical markings as employed by Nietzsche are *grammatical*, and not genetic.<sup>38</sup> The “original, unique and individual experience” is, in other words, that alien, uncanny transport that gives a being to apprehend the wonder that beings

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<sup>38</sup> By contrast, Vanessa Lemm in *Nietzsche’s Animal Philosophy* reads Nietzsche’s ordinals as genetic, rather than grammatical. Such a reading, however, necessitates the erroneous reduction of Nietzsche’s notion of memory, which he *explicitly* extends to all living beings (as further evidenced by the following footnote, which is also cited by Lemm), to that of *human* memory alone (and which is thus “inseparable,” according to Lemm, from the “transposition (*Übertragung*) of an intuited metaphor into a *word*” (135, emphasis added).

are in the blunt materiality of their withdrawal. Such is a *zoo-genesis* in which the attunement of Heidegger's "profound boredom"—a sense only of the reserve of being as such in the withdrawal of sense, that is, of being considered in its being that is the defining movement of philosophy—is one shared potentially by every being.

Moreover, as the condition of possibility for the abyssal generalisation of the image, this sense of that which escapes is necessarily a pure performative: referring only to itself and thus to its fantastic masking of the abyss. This follows necessarily from the fact that, for any translation-perception to "make sense," that is to say, for an image to be apprehended or, better, *recognised as* an image, it must, upon its "first" appearance, always already be repeated. A repetition, moreover, which thus differently divides its indivisible essence in a double movement of protention and retention. In this, the necessary iterability of a recognised sense—"an idealisation that permits one identify it as the same throughout possible repetitions" (Derrida *Spectres*, 200)—at once marks a sense of the *temporal*, with "sense of time" being understood as the multiplicity of local economies which constitute the "time of sense."

Thus, what for Nietzsche is the metaphoricity of sense is perhaps better understood as the *re-cognition of sense*: "cognition," the process of knowing in the broadest sense, here serving to recall the tropological movement by which sense is *produced*, a production which the recursive prefix remarks as already a *reproduction*. In summary then, the singular encounter *as such* is such that always already escapes in the necessary re-cognition of the perceptual metaphor *as* image, that is, in the sense of sensation *as* sensation—the sense that is tropologically produced *as* perception and affection.

Following from this, recognition in and as image therefore presupposes its siting within a co-originary structure of differential relations, insofar as an image necessarily "means" only in and as its difference (to recognise the image of redness, for example, is always already to recognise not-redness). In presupposing a multiplicity of countersignatures, in other words, recognition is thus always already a repetition that is a falling into temporality, and at once what Heidegger calls a "destructive observation." This is because, in its being reiterated, an image is always already becoming "sedimented," in that perception must necessarily ignore differences between singularities in order to *recognise* an image *as* an image, to *recognise* sense *as* sense. A recognition which, as Nietzsche tells us, in equating by forgetting or "omitting the aspects in which they are unequal" (*TL*, 83), marks its movement as already an habitual and conventional perceptual response. Thus, the *stammer* of

recognition dissimulates *what* it shows and *that* it shows—is, in a word, *writing*, and thus a *sensography*.

All of this leads us to the conclusion that there can be no recognition *as such*. Insofar as the *giving* (of the) *as such* to recognition is already a calculation, there can thus be *no recognition of recognition as such*, no sense of the *reproduction* of sense, and thus no absolute distinction between the sensible and the intelligible. That it gives is given up in the recognition of its been given, which is at once the giving of finitude, of death. In every *sense* then, that which is encountered is defaced as it at once defaces that which encounters, its destructive observation reproduced behind our backs, so to speak. A machinic rumbling both before and beyond, it now becomes clear why Avital Ronell describes “boredom”—that profound zoogenetic operator—as an “affect closest to the isolated whirl of technological being” (*Test Drive*, 232). Differentially sited and cited, *perception is thus always already apperception, which is nonetheless irreducible to cogitating activity*.

Here then, we have two distinct but indissociable sites of non-sense. On the one hand, there is the necessary withdrawal of being as such that is the condition of possibility for the production of sense (the *taking place* of language). On the other, there are the singular differences of a given perception which are necessarily and violently effaced in its recognition (language always already having *taken place*). We can see, in other words, only because we are blind, can hear and feel only because we are deaf and unfeeling. This distinction is extremely important, in that it is the former which retains the potential to interrupt the latter, and is central to my thinking in the next chapter.

For the moment, however, it is necessary only to note that it is the *iterability* of the image which, in its having taken place (again), always already situates beings in and as language. It is iterability, in other words, which “lets the traces continue to function in the absence of the general context or some elements of the context” (Derrida “Strange Institution,” 64). Furthermore, it is iterability which ensures the reproduction of *materialisation*. Heidegger, as we saw earlier, introduces the notion of *bodying* [*das Leibende*], which refers not to physical bodies, but to the reproducing or performing of material form in an as which “what we call the body” comes to appear (*Nietzsche*, III:79). As I suggested, this materialisation is the putting to work of a machinery of materiality through which a contour is reproduced—a contour and thus a distinction which is, I should now add, already the reinscribing of a *limit*.

Finally, it is only in and as the habitual effacement of difference, that is, through the idealisation of iterability by which historicity is constituted, that *beings* are

able to *be*. As Nietzsche insists, it is only “the petrification and coagulation of a mass of images” which produce the relatively stable contextual elements which allow a body (or, better, a *bodied*), whether “human” or “animal,” to “live with any repose, security, and consistency” (*TL*, 86). This is because, insofar as the recognition of an image presupposes its positing within a differential relation of images, that is, within contingent machines for generating meaning, the becoming-sedimented that is the image is *at once* the becoming-sedimented of reiterated combinations of component images (or component combinations thereof) in a complex rhizomatic network.<sup>39</sup>

In summary then, an image, the tropological making sense of sense, is a singularly situated contraction of reiterated habitual sense-components within a relational structure. Such metonymies consist of a utilitarian and conventional selection or cutting out, that is, an habitual *interpretation* of meaning, according to its use within dominant social relations. Sense, as a result, presupposes relations of power.

### Politics of sense

Making sense, in other words, is already political. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari make this clear in their gloss on the notion of opinion—a notion which, understood in the context of this text, can never belong exclusively to the human, and which will be further developed when I turn to Nietzsche’s definition of truth:

We pick out a quality supposedly common to several objects that we perceive, and an affection supposedly common to several subjects who experience it and who, along with us, grasp that quality. Opinion is the rule of the correspondance of one to the other. ... It extracts an abstract quality from perception and a general power from affection: in this sense all opinion is already political (Deleuze and Guattari *What is Philosophy?* 144-5).

How being, and *a* being, *makes* sense can thus be considered sociopolitical. In this, moreover, the *non*-sensing of singular differences of an encounter, just as much as its

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<sup>39</sup> Thus Nietzsche writes that “The whole organic world is the weaving together of beings, each with their little imaginary world around themselves: their force, their lust, their habits are found in their experiences, projected as their *outside world*. The ability [*Fähigkeit*] for creation (formation, invention, imagination) is their fundamental capacity: of themselves, these beings have, of course, likewise only an erroneous, imaginary, simplified representation. ‘A being with the habit of ordering in dreaming’—that is a living being. Immense amounts of such habits have finally become so solid, that *species* live in accordance with these orders” (cit. Lemm, 25).

habitually recognised sense, constitutes an active-passive reproduction of power and of power's limits, that is, of the production and reproduction of norms.

The recognised image is therefore already what we might call an “image-concept.” This is because, as Nietzsche says, after it “has been generated millions of times and has been handed down for many generations ... it acquires at last the same meaning ... it would have if it were the sole necessary image and if the relationship ... were a strictly causal one” (*TL*, 87). It is just such an habitual regulation of “making sense” which, as Nietzsche is at pains to point out, orders human and nonhuman animals alike.

For all such beings then, tropes are necessarily machines of calculation and repetition that, beyond and before any “I,” habitually order the sense of the world. It is, in Heideggerian terms, that of being-thrown and falling into the everyday, into *doxa*. Hence, in being always outside ourselves—and to be otherwise would constitute an eternal present—every active-passive recognition that is “to sense” presupposes bounded and bonded structures of meaning, presupposes archives and relays, backloads and rhizomatic connections. It presupposes, in short, the machinic operation of power. Always both inter- and intra-action, “making sense” is, in other words, an interpretative act of passion at once both singular and habitual, and inhabited by power that informs and conforms all knowing.

The “having,” in the sense of its having always *taken place*, of the perceptual metaphor is thus to be already excluded from the “unique and entirely individual original experience” of the *such* that it is only *as* it is. Hence, the tropology of sense is not *substitution*, but rather *constitution*, of being: an aesthetic relation without relation as the result of an exclusion from which nonhuman animals *cannot* therefore be excluded.

On the one side (of a line that can in fact no longer be drawn), it is undeniable that nonhuman animals are able to live socially with “repose, security, and consistency,” and yet such repose can *only* be granted by iterability. Hence, if one accepts that nonhuman animals are, as a result, gifted with response and thus respondable and responsive, then being-exposed in an encounter presupposes asymmetrical relations that cannot be determined in advance. On the other, if human hubris insists upon downgrading nonhuman response-ability to “merely” instinctive reactions to sedimented perceptions, must one not also read in the much-vaunted human response rather the captivation within the disinhibiting ring of the destructive conventional reaction? As Derrida writes, “what would ever distinguish the response, in its total



purity, the so-called free and responsible response, from a reaction to a complex system of stimuli? And what, after all, is a citation?" (*The Animal*, 53-4).

This response-reaction dichotomy has a long and illustrious philosophical history, but for the moment it is sufficient to gesture towards just one consequence of its ongoing deconstruction, one requiring a vast and painstaking analysis to unpack. To no longer be able to posit nonhuman animals as reactive mechanisms is necessarily to refuse the "premeditation" that determines a responsible, that is, a guilty *subject* and which grounds humanist-juridical discourse. If animals respond, or humans react, then the "responsible" intentional subject before the law becomes indeterminable. One can thus understand the considerable significance invested in its maintenance, as well as the centrality of the nonhuman animal to its ongoing deconstruction.

### **The truths of men**

It remains to ask Nietzsche, however, as to the *difference*, if any, between human and nonhuman metaphoricity of sense, and the predominantly human sense of *verbal* language.<sup>40</sup> For Nietzsche there is indeed a difference between "man" and "animals": that of the mark of *marking out*, of excluding and externalising "the animal" upon which man depends in the production of the proper, albeit empty, concept of "Man" itself.

As we have seen, nonhuman animals cannot be excluded from the iterated image that is its metaphorical displacement from the *as such* and, as a result, from the coagulated mass of images and combinations. Such images and combinations permit not only repose and security, however, but also the positing of sociopolitical castes and degrees, that is, of subordinations and clearly marked boundaries. Nevertheless, this would seem to be exactly how Nietzsche describes that which marks out the nonhuman from the human animal: "Everything which distinguishes man from the animals depends upon this ability to volatilise perceptual metaphors in a schema, and thus to dissolve an image into a concept" (*TL*, 84). It is such schemata, he continues, which then allow "the construction of a pyramidal order according to castes and degrees, the creation of a new world of laws, privileges, subordinations, and clearly marked boundaries ... the regulative and imperative world" (84). Reading this section more

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<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that even the distinction of "verbal" language alleged to be uniquely human is increasingly being erased, resulting in a number of dramatic u-turns among eminent linguists such as Noam Chomsky.

closely, however, in the hope of chasing down the difference which situates a man's mode of translation as different to that of an animal, one discovers this difference does *not* in fact consist of man's having the *word*, and thus the concept, but, quite simply, in man's having of *truth*.

At first sight, such a division appears to unambiguously reiterate the long familiar metaphysical gesture which allocates, and in so doing defines, man and man alone as the site of teleological reason. This is, however, impossible according to Nietzsche's logic for several reasons. To begin with, in that the word "is not supposed to serve as a reminder of the unique and entirely individual original experience to which it owes its origin" (83), the word is therefore already a word-*concept* and thus excluded from the singular "truth" of being as such. As with the image, the word is rather the site of an habitual recognition that ignores difference in order to let "the traces continue to function in the absence of the general context."

Moreover, within the bonded structures of meaning, within the machinery of habitual recognition inhabited by power, word-concepts are inseparably entangled with image-concepts, the latter composing the overwhelming majority of a human animal's tropological functioning of perception and affection. Think, for example, of kinesic and paralinguistic communications such as expression, tone of voice, movement and stillness, respiration, muscle tensity, even peristalsis—all of which, in that they are iterable and/or are read as such, function at the nonverbal "animal" level of the Nietzschean image and which are, in the main, irreducible to the conscious Cartesian "I." This strongly argues against the claim that human language in the narrow sense evolved to replace crude so-called "animal" language in that, if indeed this were the case, then the evolving of this new, more efficient method would have resulted in the decay and disuse of "animal" language among humans.<sup>41</sup>

Given this, the "second stage" which for Nietzsche marks out the human—and again, it should be clear that the ordinal is solely a *grammatical* marker, and at once a mark of grammar's "unconscious domination"<sup>42</sup>—does not therefore bear the mark of a teleological progression. Rather, it must be thought of as *another way* or another *mode* of inhabiting and being-inhabited by generative structures of meaning.

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<sup>41</sup> Indeed, it can be argued that verbal language also serves to distract from, or mask, kinesic and paralinguistic dissemination, and can do so only because it is considerably *less* efficient. Emil Menzel has shown, for example, that not only are chimpanzees "masters of gestural subtlety," but also that the most dramatically *humanoid* of their gestures are made only "by the most infantile and inexperienced animals"—the use of which decreases as the young chimps gain experience, and thus subtlety (Noske *Beyond Boundaries*, 148). This is not to suggest, however, that verbal distraction is a uniquely human trait.

<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche *Beyond Good and Evil*, §20.

That is to say, being-human is simply being *a way of inhabiting the abyssal technicity of language* which remains always discontinuous with the multiplicity of *other* ways of being-animal, but which is nonetheless shared across overlapping zones of indecipherability or undecidability. One might think here of the recognised “meaning” that is this encounter of an aspirated breath, for example, or of a stillness. Hence, to use an exemplary nonhuman from amongst Nietzsche’s extensive bestiary, while being-gnat-in-the-world remains discontinuous to the plurality of ways of being-tiger, being-bird, or being-plant (or rather, being *this* “tiger,” *this* “bird,” or *this* “plant”), there is nevertheless no *ontological* difference dividing living-beings-in-the-world, no difference in *essence* between “the human” and “the animal” as there is for Heidegger. “[I]f we could communicate with the gnat,” writes Nietzsche, “we would learn that he likewise ... feels the flying center of the universe within himself” (*TL*, 79).

Being dis-placed in metaphor, there can “be” only correspondence without correspondence, relating without relation, a *co-responding* which necessarily interrupts every essence, which disrupts every sovereign self. There can “be” no taking place, but only and ever—and which is neither “only” nor forever—an already taken place and an always not yet taken place: no presence but only and ever difference and deferral. As a result, living beings “ek-sist” in a relation without relation that can never be “natural.” Hence, following Nietzsche’s logic and at once moving beyond it, “natural,” whether considered as a concept or a word, as a signifier or a signified or a referent, necessarily finds itself transformed into its opposite, into something fantastical, some fantastic thing which is not a thing, which *is*, and *is nothing*.<sup>43</sup>

For this reason, and contrary to the thought of both Heidegger and Blanchot, it necessarily follows that nonhuman animals, both similarly and differently to man, apprehend *a* world. Rather than a “natural,” or rather *supernatural*, *unmediated* “animal” communication, there is the rapid dissemination of sense across large groups of living beings, be they human, nonhuman, or both and neither. By contrast, in its fabulous effacement of dissemination upon which would-be “animal” telepathy is constituted, the myth of “nature” serves only to reproduce an all too humanist ideology of the undying animal.

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<sup>43</sup> At times, however, Nietzsche suggests that anthropogenesis “takes place” only when man (who is not yet “Man”) banishes “the most flagrant *bellum omni contra omnes* [war of each against all]” in order to live socially (*TL*, 81). In this, Nietzsche in fact falls foul of the nature-culture dichotomy which his own text is in the process of rendering inoperative. As Donna Haraway acutely remarks, ‘[t]he naturalistic fallacy is the mirror-image misstep to transcendental humanism’ (*When Species Meet*, 79).

More than even this, however, not only can there be no human exceptionalism on the basis of language and world, nor is it possible, as Nietzsche's philosopher-gnat would tell us, even to justify an anthropological *privilege*:

the insect or the bird perceives an entirely different world from the one that man does, and that the question of which of these perceptions of the world is the more correct one is quite meaningless, for this would have to have been decided previously in accordance with the criterion of the *correct perception*, which means, in accordance with a criterion which is *not available*. But in any case it seems to me that "the correct perception"—which would mean "the adequate expression of an object in the subject"—is a contradictory impossibility (86).<sup>44</sup>

The word-concept then, is another way of being in language, and thus of being in difference, but it is neither prior nor subsequent to, neither before nor above, nor (spatially or temporally) *further* than, as we shall see, any other translative displacement. And even here too the question, and the nonhuman animal, remains. In reiterated giving voice, in the call calling for a response, in declaration and in warning, but also in the gesture of a paw or claw, do not certain animals "name" or "sign" an image recognised, and thus shared, by an other?

It is clear that we have not yet located the "truth" which marks the human out from other animals. Both the word and the image are necessarily dissimulations, habitual formations which, in permitting repose and security to human and nonhuman animals alike, allow us to live and work together, that is, to "lie with the herd." Nevertheless, it is exactly here that the difference is found, albeit without being founded, in that it is *only* man who invents—

a uniformly valid and binding designation ... for things, *and this legislation of language likewise establishes the first laws of truth*. For the contrast between truth and lie arises here for the first time. The liar is a person who uses the valid designations, the words, in order to make something which is unreal appear to be real. ... He misuses fixed conventions by means of arbitrary substitutions or even reversals of names. If he does this in a selfish and moreover harmful manner, society will cease to trust him and will thereby exclude him (81, emphasis added).

"Truths" are thus habitual duties "which society imposes in order to exist," to wit "to be truthful means to employ the usual metaphors" (84). It is thus only from these

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<sup>44</sup> In the same way, the "language" of animals puts out of the question exactly which form of language—alphabetic, pictorial, ideographic—is the more abstract, the more mimetic and so on.

necessary habits that there “arises a moral impulse in regard to truth” (84), and it is *this* which marks the difference. Only with the appearance of a *moral* impulse to truth, and thus of the moral exclusion of the lie, does “man” appear, and as different from the nonhuman animal. Whereas a nonhuman animal may “make something which is unreal appear to be real,” may misuse fixed conventions and perhaps be socially ostracised as a result, he or she cannot, however, lie in an *immoral* (or indeed, moral) sense, but only in an *extra-moral* [*aussermoralischen*] sense.

The truths of men are, in short, “illusions which we have forgotten are illusions” (84), in that dissimulation is the condition of possibility for reason itself. Upon the abyss, “rational man” thus legislates, he universalises and, in so doing, constructs “values”—values which exclude and demonise, which serve only to mark out. For Nietzsche then, the difference between human and nonhuman animals is the difference *between* the Law *and* making sense, *between* the reactive legislation of (illusory) moral truth *and* the aesthetic constitution of meaning.

Being-animal is thus to be exposed within bounded structures generative of meaning, and yet without (or before) the Law in a double sense: that of the sovereign who is not subject *to* the Law but who, precisely because she is not a recognised subject *of* Law, finds herself nevertheless utterly subjected.<sup>45</sup> A nonhuman animal, in other words, stands before the Law not like Franz Kafka’s man from the country, but rather as a prisoner-suppliant of Kafka’s penal colony who must learn man’s law by her wounds, by its being written over and into her body.<sup>46</sup> Thus, given that “man” is nothing but the appearance of the lie within the concept of truth, it is not simply truths that are illusions, but also the phallogocentric superiority of “Man” himself. Lacking any foundation, man necessarily builds his edifice of concepts only “from himself,” thus constructing a world “more solid, more universal, better known, and more human than the immediately perceived world” (*TL*, 84). Man’s truths, in other words, are “thoroughly anthropomorphic,” and thus can never be “really and universally valid apart from man” (85).

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<sup>45</sup> On this double sense of “outlaw,” see Derrida *The Beast and the Sovereign* (2008).

<sup>46</sup> For Kafka, the Law, inscribing innumerable yet indistinguishable deaths between which the “ignorant onlooker would see no difference,” remains indecipherable to the end, and whose monument is a death-machine that can no longer be maintained (“In the Penal Colony,” 170).

## Zoogenesis (2): encountering the *Übermensch*

It remains to be seen, however, as to what this might mean for Nietzsche's philosophy. Given that nonhuman animals similarly require an "inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force" (86), they are necessarily *no closer* to the *immediate* perception of *this* uniquely situated relation of being, no more "originary" than the rational man with his moral schema. As a consequence, Nietzsche is by no means advocating a "return" to some kind of preverbal, quasi-natural state. This would be to advocate a movement which is both impossible, insofar "the human" takes place only in and as the legislation of "truth," and nonsensical, insofar as it would be to move only from a cooler lie to a fiery lie, both of which relate only to one another and which are always "equally" displaced from the unique, individual and original relation (although no calculation, of course, could ever measure this incommensurable proximity and distance of equality). In that one absolutely discontinuous vehicle can be no more truthful than a second, and thus there can be no *judgments* of absolute truth and value, there remains, in short, difference (or *différance*) without privilege.

It is thus clear that what Nietzsche seeks is not a simple inversion of exceptionalism which rather valorises the animal over the human, and which would thus only serve to reinscribe the human-animal division. Rather, and this is absolutely central, what Nietzsche's text gives us to think is a way of being (human) with others who do not share our language, who are neither Socratic nor Heideggerian reflections of ourselves, but are rather those others with whom or with which neither consensus nor essential disclosure is possible.

Every interpretation, that is, every *sense* is, as we have seen, always a *misrecognition*, insofar as it entails the necessary non-recognition, and thus the effacement, of the singular as such. Nevertheless, while the tropological movement can never be identical without ceasing to be interpretation, neither can it ever leave that which it interprets without ceasing to be its vehicle. The reproduced sense must remain, so to speak, always *touching* (on) the sensing-sensed encounter. In other words, it must, albeit at some immeasurably proximal distance, always be *with*, and in this the effaced materiality as such always remains to interrupt its habitual recognition.

However, when necessary habit petrifies into dogma, into legislation, then, rather than an encounter of bodies constituted in and as relation, a mis-recognition comes to *predetermine* the sense of an encounter. That is to say, the attunement that is being-exposed is *misrecognised* in the strong sense, insofar as one holds to a recognised (sedimented) sense of the encounter *prior to* that encounter, and *as such* the

encounter is essentially prevented from taking place: *I* see without having being seen, *I* touch without having been touched. Detached from that which gives itself to be interpreted, interpretation ceases to be interpretation and thus becomes Law. It is this latter misrecognition which, according to Nietzsche, is the mark of the human: the falling always already into the *transcendental*.

The comparison with Hegel is instructive here. Like Nietzsche, Hegel too argues that the concept “exists in the animal,” but that only the human concept can exist “in its fixed, independent freedom,” that is, as a transcendental ideal.<sup>47</sup> The difference, however, lies in the fact that, for Hegel, it is precisely the *animal* who is necessarily “sick” and “anxious” as a result. As a coda to this, however, and following the argument explored here, it should be noted that “misrecognition,” understood as the predetermining and thus prevention of the encounter, is necessarily confined neither to human or nonhuman egological consciousness, nor to human verbal language. Indeed, to do so in the latter case would serve only to reinstall a traditional human-animal distinction based upon a properly human belief in God.

The specific difference outlined by Nietzsche then, is that of the moral legislation of truth common to human ways of being, rather than misrecognition *per se*, although even here it is by no means possible to rule out *a priori* another way of being thus “morally impulsive” amongst nonhuman ways of being. As Derrida points out, “where there is transgenerational transmission, there is law, and therefore crime and peccability” (*Beast*, 106).<sup>48</sup>

It is in the face of this falling-surfacing of language that Nietzsche, whose well-known assertion that to believe in grammar is still to believe in God is one to which we must never cease to respond, posits his notion of recursive *artistic conduct*. Such conduct is defined by the vigilance of an affirmative *response* to the inartistic, *reactive* violence of misrecognition. Such is that responsive and responsible way of being-with which always again preserves the possibility of an uncanny zoogenetic transport which gives (a) being to apprehend that beings *are* in the blunt materiality of their withdrawal, its chance and necessity preserved in the singularity of every encounter.

Responsible conduct, in other words, affirms in the face of blind universals that responsive touching–being-touched which, exceeding the transcendental, remains

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<sup>47</sup> In fact, it is possible to read Nietzsche’s entire essay as a revaluing of this sentence from the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline and Critical Writings* (cit. Benjamin “What if the Other were an Animal?” 67).

<sup>48</sup> A consideration of transgenerational nonhuman transmission runs throughout this thesis, and will take on a specific focus in the discussion of Bernard Stiegler in the final chapter.

always to come. Such is a sense only of the *taking place* of sense prior to its recognition, which thus marks the opening of what Nietzsche describes as both a “forbidden metaphor” and an “unheard-of relation.” The singularity that is the Nietzschean individual does not *live*, does not *exist*, but rather “is” that which exceeds every determinable form. It “is,” in short, that which *out-lives* [*überleben*].<sup>49</sup> Here, Werner Hamacher’s reading of the “over-” or “outhuman” in his “Disgregation of the Will”: Nietzsche on the Individual and Individuality” is particularly illuminating, and will be considered more fully when this notion of the forbidden, unheard-of metaphor is further explored in the next chapter. Rather than “being a social or psychic form of human existence,” Hamacher notes acutely, “the individual—exceeding type and genus—is the announcement of the *Über-mensch*” (159). Nietzsche’s *überhuman*, in other words, is a call and a demand which, remaining always already to come, thus withdraws from all recognition and, as such, exceeds all specular delimitation. In this, it interrupts the staging of Heidegger’s fabulous anthropo-magical mirror in and as a silent announcing which necessarily out-lives any enclosure of the properly “human.”<sup>50</sup> Artistic conduct is thus a way of being-*with-in-the-world*. A conducting towards that response which, in its having always already taken place, constitutes a *creative* forgetting of being in encountering the way in which something comes to be that which it is as such. “Invention,” as Nietzsche writes, “beyond the limits of experience” (“The Philosopher,” 53).

Being “clever beasts,” humans *invented* knowing and thus *invented the division* between humans and animals. Here then, we are returned to the inescapable destructiveness of any observation concerning nonhuman animal existence, of a “talking as if” in which the other *of* nonhuman being is, in a stammering catachresis, written over by way of all too human (pre)conceptions.<sup>51</sup> Nothing, as Derrida says of this or that animal, “can ever rob me of the certainty that what we have here is an existence which refuses to be conceptualised [*rebelle à tout concept*]” (*The Animal*, 9). Here, I take Derrida’s ironic statement to mean that ways of being are in themselves the rebellious refuting of conceptualisation, indecipherable and undecidable spaces in the putatively secure edifice of the certain world.

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<sup>49</sup> On Nietzsche’s notion of *überleben*, see *Beyond Good and Evil*, sections 210–212.

<sup>50</sup> In addition to Hamacher on outliving as *living-on* (*sur-vivre*), see Jacques Derrida “Living On” in Harold Bloom et al. *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1979), 75–176.

<sup>51</sup> The emphasised *of* is here being made to do double genitive duty, both subjective and objective: the other *of* nonhuman being that which both “belongs” to a nonhuman animal (in relation to a human animal), and that which being (whether nonhuman or human) always already reproduces.



Ways of being in language are such that they can never be securely delimited, but are rather ways of being disposed outside that presuppose as their condition the overlapping zones and jagged edges that reserve the space of ethical response. Such are the violent infolded encounters which, in *constituting* newly-opened spaces asymmetrically inhabited by power, are by definition so deformed as to be unrecognisable. While simple, remainderless “communication” remains impossible, there nevertheless remains differential *ways* of being-with, that is, of being-together primarily related in difference. To conduct one’s self in an artistic encounter is to be open to the incalculable, to be exposed to that which exceeds sensible recognition. It is, in short, to say “Yes!” to the chance and necessity of life’s ever again. Not only is it to be exposed to the creative withdrawal of being as such, it is, moreover, to *rejoice* in the encounter, as indeed Lewis Carroll’s Gnat, the untimely cousin of Nietzsche’s gnat-metaphysician, expects of Alice, from whom he awaits a *response*.

## Conclusion

In a different direction then, upon a different path, it thus becomes imperative to disclose another way to give death, and to the giving of dying, to animals. *To give death to other animals*. Such is to give death as gift, the gift of and the giving that is the shared finitude of living beings, a gift which renders impossible the monstrous hubris of an unthinking utilisation and consumption of fetishised—and thus doubly disembodied—flesh and corpses. It is this gift-giving which Heidegger rejects out of *hand* in his excising of the “merely living” from living *being* as such.<sup>52</sup>

Whereas finitude is the condition of possibility for a thinking encounter, it is finitude which is elided, that is, rendered imperceptible, made nonsense, by an *a priori* unthought “truth” which overwrites other bodies. Such is the paradoxical ellision which calculates nonhuman animals as undying and, as a result, killable. Against this, Heidegger’s exclusive corral must be interrupted. To give *this* death is to bear witness, to attest. It is to be always inadequately response-able to this death of *this* other animal.

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<sup>52</sup> On the centrality of the hand for Heidegger’s philosophy, see *What is Called Thinking?* trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Perennial, 2004). Also, see Derrida’s 1985 critique of this position in “Geschlecht II: Heidegger’s Hand” in John Sallis (ed.) *Deconstruction and Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 161-196.

Despite the secular salvation dreams of the Enlightenment's instrumental experimental thinking, no animal (in the broadest possible sense) can die in the place of the other, and in this sense it is indeed the case that dying can be neither given *nor* taken away. Nevertheless, as Derrida rightly insists, it is a "fact that it is only on the basis of death, and in its name, that *giving* and *taking* become possible" (*Gift of Death*, 44). This is a death which must necessarily pass through, in being exposed across, an indissociably doubled abyss which confounds every interior-exterior and organic-technological dichotomy: on the one paw an abyssal structure of language which necessarily exceeds any reduction to the verbal and, on the other, an abyssal bodying which exceeds any organismic delimitation.<sup>53</sup> The doubled abyss, in other words, that is the repeatability of language and the singularity of being-there.

In refusing to elide the deaths of animals, being with nonhuman animals thus becomes possible. It is to recognise that language is not the reserve and the preserve of the human and, infinitely more than this, is *never* solely a "human" experience. Rather, being as such is already shared, constituted by encounters across languages which, in Jean-François Lyotard's phrase, produce bodies "systematically mad" one to another. Unlike Heidegger's specular fable, the fable with which Nietzsche begins is both nonfable *and* counterfable: thrown outside of ourselves and hence excluded from the myth of original plentitude, the shared finitude of beings in and as metaphors which mark our originary being-with necessarily demands a response. Such thinking moves beyond both traditional humanist *and* Heideggerian überhumanist metaphysics, and towards the necessity of always again rethinking that destructive observation which is, of course, the very interpreting of something *as* such that Heidegger *a priori* denies to his fabulous animal.

In concluding this first part, I suggest therefore that, if we are to become both responsive and responsible, no matter how inadequately, within the midst of a largely unremarked global slaughter, it is absolutely imperative that posthumanist philosophy think both the finitude and the nonsubstitutable deaths of other animals. Such is to think the sharing of each other and of the world, always already separated by the greatest possible proximity.

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<sup>53</sup> On this doubled abyss of language and body, see Cary Wolfe's "'Flesh and Finitude: Thinking Animals in (Post)Humanist Philosophy'" in *SubStance* #117, 37:3 (2008), 8-36.

## Part Two: Encounters

### Introduction

We discovered in the previous chapter that, in analysing “the essence of animality,” Heidegger in fact stages a fabulous anthropo-magical mirror in an attempt to render visible the essence of human being which being-human itself renders invisible. In so doing, he constructs a specular introspective relation outside of which nonhuman animals are reduced to phantom individuations which, constituted *as* beings only in the anthropomorphic looking-glass of the Dasein, are brought-to-appearing for no other reason than as puppets that man gives itself to see. In this specular captivity of the Same, the way of being-human thus remains corralled within a circle that excludes every other “who” or “which” who does not share “our” language. As such, Heidegger forecloses any potential opening to a radical alterity: becoming-other, by definition, being a moment and a movement in which “I” can no longer recognise “my” reflection.

Enclosed within this humanist economy of the Same, such destructive misrecognition necessarily delimits “the human” in a double sense. In other words, it both circumscribes the proper and precludes that eventual opening to an *other* other necessary for the uncanny disposition within which the Dasein comes to be. It is thus imperative that we move beyond the mirror, and beyond the human-animal dichotomy upon which it depends—an extramoral imperative to which, as we shall explore in more detail in this part and throughout, Nietzsche’s thinking of “active forgetting” responds.

Demonstrating the impossibility of a humanist enclosure constituted by the exclusivity of access to the “as”-structure, Nietzsche’s originary technicity of sense affirms precisely that excess which Heidegger seeks to constrain within an exclusively humanist frame. Constitutive technicity, in other words, affirms that that alien creative transport which gives a sense only of the reserve of being as such is a transport potentially shared by every living being: never *anthropogenesis* but always *zoogenesis*. Moreover, it is this same originary technicity which, as we have seen, not only derails every judgment of absolute truth and value and interrupts any hierarchy of proximity,

but also excludes *a priori* both vitalism and biological continuism, as well as the possibility of an essential distinction which divides any one species from all others.

The implications of this are enormous. In contrast to Hegel and Blanchot, for example, naming for Nietzsche can never be an act in the name of the master, can never name in the name of essence and exclusion. Put another way, difference as and at the origin of sense necessarily puts out of the question any notion of representationalism, and thus any narcissistic form of identity politics which posits an *a priori* essence in seeking to inscribe a determining homogeneity within impermeable borders.

Rather, originary technics demands, and in so doing affirms, only an encounter with another whose language “I” do *not* recognise. This unrecognisable other is, moreover, *every* other, an other with whom or with which not only is essential disclosure but also *consensus* always impossible. Hence, originary difference simultaneously interrupts both the liberal contractual argument and the related arguments of “tolerant” multiculturalism, both of which depend upon an exclusion which functions to animalise all those others whose language “I” (or “we”) do not recognise.

At the same time, language ceases to be the privileged site from which one can, in sovereign fashion, exclude the Other on the basis of lack, that is, by way of an attribution of mute bestiality. In contrast, as we shall see, the imperative of active forgetting is nothing less than *invention*, a creative event the call of which shatters the mirror and at once the psyche. It is to this zoogenetic event alone which the term ***animal encounter*** will be hereafter reserved, and which constitutes the focus of this part. This should *not*, however, be understood as a call to dutifully “encounter animals” in the sense of “bettering oneself” by taking responsibility *for* an animal, nor should it be understood as a prescriptive instruction to somehow “commune with nature,” both of which presuppose a prior substantive human subject, and thus an unthinking human-animal distinction.

Rather, remaining with the notion of responsive conduct in relation to what I have described as the sense only of the *taking place* of sense, we can now better understand why Nietzsche insists that man “grows dumb” before such “intuitions.” As necessarily prior to recognition, there can therefore “exist no word” with which to name such an encounter (TL, 90). Nevertheless, continues Nietzsche, all is not lost: chance may yet call forth a “creative correspondance [*schöpferisch zu entsprechen*]”

which shatters the conceptual barriers of habit (90). Having being rendered dumb, stripped bare of habitual concepts by an animal encounter, this shatteringly creative correspondance can thus only come into being, as Nietzsche insists, “in forbidden metaphors [*verbotenen Metaphern*] and in unheard-of combinations of concepts [*unerhörten Begriffsfügungen*]” (90).

The question which will occupy this part is therefore quite simple: how might this unheard-of relation be approached, a relation which, while not yet even sensed, is paradoxically already forbidden? How, in short, might one recognise the unrecognisable? It is in the context of this question alone that I will engage here with the otherwise disparate discourses of Nietzsche, Franz Kafka, Jacques Derrida, Karl Marx and Jacques Rancière.

Nietzsche’s notion of forbidden, unheard-of figures which are called forth in and as the uncanny zoogeneses of animal encounters is hugely important here. These are inventions “beyond the limits of experience” which, as we shall see, necessarily take place in the spacing, in the *play*, between the twin pillars of nihilism. Between, that is to say, the positing of suprasensory ideals and the parodic play of self-interest. Such, I argue, are those monstrously “improper” metonymies which announce themselves as the deafening yet inaudible fanfare which throws Kafka’s young dog from his senses, as the “world-historical necromancy” which exalts the struggles of what Marx calls “the spirit of revolution,” and as the “cross” or “wrong” name of Rancière’s revolutionary performative.

As prior to every name, every word, and every recognisable sense, however, such an “improper” metonymy can thus only ever be a *prosthesis*, a bandage and a mask of disconcealment which holds the place of that which cannot be recognised. In this, it does not make *sense*, as we shall see, but rather only makes *sensible*. Such an improper dressing is, moreover, the chance of address: the staging of a correspondence which inscribes an aberration within the order of things, although only for as long as it remains *between* sense(s).

A fabulous tale of a dog, while not a fable, will hopefully illuminate this further.

### 3. Making Sense beyond Species: Investigating Dogs with Kafka and Nietzsche

A more advanced physiology will surely confirm that the artistic force inheres our becoming, not only in that of the human being, but also in that of the animal.

— Friedrich Nietzsche *Kritische Studienausgabe*

#### **The Word of Dog**

In an attempt to account for a life largely spent seeking to understand the caesura passed over in silence between, on the one paw, how one desires to live and, on the other, how one is actually compelled to live by the laws and institutions that bind the *socius*, the elderly canine of Franz Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog [*Forschungen eines Hundes*]" (1922) is first of all compelled to recall the compulsion which underlies his own research [*forschung*] and his ceaseless desire for understanding. He must, in short, call forth the event of his own coming to be: the moment in which a young dog comes to be thrown outside of himself into the "peculiar openness" of critique. Insofar as this young dog is, and yet is not, the investigator himself, the autobiographical narrative which follows is thus equally an *heterobiography*, that is, an accounting and a recounting of an other that I am.

The transformation of young dog to investigator offers here an exemplary example of the maddening, zoopoetic, zoogenetic displacement which I seek to trace in this chapter, and which in turn will call forth parodic ghosts and revolutionary spirits, will call last men to account and corpses to outlive. While this chapter will focus on this creative encounter "itself," one should remember throughout that such an encounter can never be restricted to the *human* animal alone, a recollection which the term "*animal* encounter" will hopefully repeatedly invoke. This is of central importance, as will become increasingly clear when I consider the place of the animal in the texts of William S. Burroughs and of Deleuze and Guattari in a later chapter, insofar as it exactly such encounters which the ideology of the "undying animal" seeks to efface. Related to this, moreover, is the fact that the uncanny displacement of the

dog-investigator is, at the same time, necessarily an example of that which can essentially have no example. It is an exemplarity, nevertheless, which allows one to tell, to narrate, a story. It therefore constitutes for this chapter yet another exemplary fiction: a fable, so to speak.

Only a careless reading, however, would classify Kafka's text within the traditional genre of the fable. In fact, such an anthropocentric reading is explicitly undone from the start. Dismissive of the other "wretched, limited, dumb creatures who have no language but mechanical cries" (279), the investigator reduces *all* other animals to an homogeneous mass bound only by "the basest [*gemeinste*] of interests" giving rise to "conflict and hatred" (279). Hence humans too, essentially lacking canine language and thus those canine social institutions geared towards being together beyond all division, are necessarily "wretched." This explicit *canicentrism*, and the anthropocentric outrage it provokes, thus parodically calls into question that very anthropocentric hubris which presumes the possible reduction of animal figures to the simple, remainderless anthropomorphisms of moral education.

This interruption of the specular humanist economy, which underwrites the traditional genre of the fable, in this way already calls to the encounter to come, to an *animal* encounter which is, as we shall see, at once call and demand, proclamation and manifesto. In such an encounter, a being is called upon to become other by a radical alterity which remains always to come, and as such its call necessarily refuses all recognition and thus exceeds all specular delimitation. It marks, in other words, a refusal and an excess of the proper, be that the properly human or the properly canine. Tracing only an unspeakable wound, a *discontinuity*, the animal encounter is, in short, an as yet unnameable *disposition* which proclaims only its own monstrosity.

Recounting his becoming, the investigator recalls a youth like any other. Prior to the interruption of another, or perhaps the same, caesura passed over in silence, his younger self leads an unremarkable and pleasurable life in the senselessness of the everyday, "blind and deaf to everything" ("Investigations," 280). Happily lacking any sense, in the dark, one day however, the youth becomes the sudden focus of an unimaginable brightness. Within this brightness, the young dog finds himself abruptly recalled to his self, that is, to the singular situatedness of his being-there, whereupon seven strange dogs appear before him, conjured as if out of the darkness and accompanied by terrible, unrecognisable sounds. These dogs, insists the investigator on behalf of his youth, are doubtless "dogs like you and me," and yet they are not dogs

at all. Rather, and this will become clearer later, they can be better described as a species only under the species of the nonspecies:

I regarded them by *force of habit* simply as dogs ... but while I was still involved in these *reflections* the music ... literally knocked the breath out of me and swept me far away from those actual little dogs, and quite against my will, while I howled as if some pain were being inflicted upon me, my mind could attend to nothing but this blast of music which seemed to come from all sides, from the heights, from the deeps, from everywhere, surrounding the listener, overwhelming him, crushing him, and over his swooning body still blowing fanfares so near that they seemed far away and almost inaudible. And then a respite came, for one was already too exhausted, too annulled, too feeble to listen any longer; a respite came and I beheld again the seven little dogs carrying out their evolutions, making their leaps (281-2, my emphasis).<sup>54</sup>

Here, between the young dog he was and the investigator he will become, is the interval *as such*, the extreme passivity of its apocalyptic instant marked by a rupture in and of the first person narrative. Thrown from his self by the music of everywhere, nothing remains of the youth but the violent seizure of attunement: *my* mind, the seat and site of the “I,” displaced otherwise to the “he” or “it” of an overwhelmed listener, an auditor, that of the third-person *par excellence*.

Driven “out of my senses” (284) and thus an intoxicated interval between first-persons, in this moment Kafka’s narrator is necessarily other to any and every “I.” As a result, for the “I” that comes to be only following the event, its founding intervallic being cannot be *recalled*, but can only be called and called forth *as* another, that is, as *he* or, better, as *it*. This momentary displacement into the third-person thus marks an absolute discontinuity. The investigator can never say “I *am* other,” but rather “I” *is* other, is another, the “is” retaining the mark of an undetermined neutrality. No longer a youth, the investigator is born anew: *I* was a child, *ich war ein Kind*,

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<sup>54</sup> The German text reads as follows: [*M*]an beobachtete sie gewohnheitsmäßig, wie Hunde ... viele von solcher oder ähnlicher Art kannte ich, aber während man noch in solchen Überlegungen befangen war, nahm allmählich die Musik überhand, faßte einen förmlich, zog einen hinweg von diesen wirklichen kleinen Hunden und, ganz wider Willen, sich sträubend mit allen Kräften, heulend, als würde einem Schmerz bereitet, durfte man sich mit nichts anderem beschäftigen, als mit der von allen Seiten, von der Höhe, von der Tiefe, von überall her kommenden, den Zuhörer in die Mitte nehmenden, überschüttenden, erdrückenden, über seiner Vernichtung noch in solcher Nähe, daß es schon Ferne war, kaum hörbar noch Fanfaren blasenden Musik. Und wieder wurde man entlassen, weil man schon zu erschöpft, zu vernichtet, zu schwach war, um noch zu hören, man wurde entlassen und sah die sieben kleinen Hunde ihre Prozessionen führen, ihre Sprünge tun (“Forschungen eines Hundes”).



recalls the investigator of his new, posthumous self. For the “I” that is other, therefore, the inside of the inside is the outside, its passage marked only by a caesura.

As Maurice Blanchot explains, what Kafka teaches us “is that storytelling brings the neutral into play ... kept in the custody of the third-person ‘it’ [*il*], an ‘it’ that is neither a third person nor the simple cloak of impersonality” (*Infinite Conversation*, 384; trans. modified). It is the neutral, he continues, which permits us to feel that the accounting is not being recounted by *anyone* and which, moreover, interrupts the subjects of the action, causing them to “fall into a relation of self-nonidentification” (384):

Something happens to them that they can only recapture by relinquishing their power to say “I.” And what happens has always already happened: they can only indirectly account for it as a sort of self-forgetting, the forgetting that introduces them into the present without memory that is the present of narrating speech (384-5).

The “it,” adds Blanchot in a footnote, “designates ‘its’ place as both the place from which it will always be missing and that will thus remain empty, but also as a surplus of space, a place that is always too many” (462n2). This *it* is, in short, a mark or a placeholder of “the intrusion of the other ... in its irreducible strangeness” which Blanchot calls both *spectral* and *ghostlike* (385). It is this intrusion, as we shall see, this imposition of an empty surplus, which marks the Kafkan encounter beyond any sense of species. Such is the intervallic demand in and as which a young dog ceases to be in having always already become an investigator.

Coming to his senses and yet sensing only a senseless call, the investigator is compelled to offer assistance to the seven *actual* dogs. He is constrained, that is, both to answer the call of the encounter and to answer *for* it. With “good manners” that are at once “good morals [*guten Sitten*],” he greets the dogs, and in doing so recognises them *as* dogs. Recognition that is, however, refused. This, the greatest offence to custom and habit, places the dogs not only beyond all *sense* but, and as a result, beyond even the certainty of *specie*: “Perhaps they were not dogs at all? But how should they not be dogs?” (“Investigations,” 283).

In this monstrous affront to proper sense, another constraint at once imposes itself upon the investigator: “a labyrinth of wooden bars ... arose around that place, though I had not noticed it before” (282). Upon coming to be other, in other words, a

previously insensible limit has become manifest to the investigator *as* a limit, *as* a sensible constraint. He senses, that is to say, the limit of good sense, of its “proper” reproduction. In this way, the contingent limit of sense comes to be sensible precisely *as* contingent, and all sense certainty is necessarily lost as a result: “it is too much to say that I even saw them, that I actually even saw them” (281).

In a momentary respite from the violence of the encounter, overcome by the anxiety of absolute uncertainty and at once forcefully constrained by this terrible and, it transpires, *criminal* affront to proper sense, the investigator calls desperately upon God to restore divine order: the dogs, he exclaims, are “violating the law [*das Gesetz*]” (283). Falling back in a moment of anxious recuperation upon the certain gaze of judgment, the investigator thus attempts to refuse the refusal of recognition, disavowing their monstrous affront to good sense as symptomatic of their *shame* [*Schuldgefühl*]. Falling back upon precisely that sense traditionally refused to all animals but one, the investigator thus attempts to dispel his intense anxiety by way of *ressentiment*. He seeks, in other words, to externalise the uncannily intimate alterity of the encounter, reducing the refusal of recognition to a manifestation of the dogs’ shame in having their sinful *nakedness* witnessed, a gaze which serves to mark them as fallen beings expelled from plenitude.

We shall return to this peculiarly human notion of nakedness shortly, but for the moment we find that it is just as the investigator is in this way attempting to efface the madness of the encounter that the terrible music irresistibly imposes itself once more. Arising “without variation from the remotest distance” (284) which, as we know, is at once the most near (“fanfares so near that they seemed far away”), this dreadful music spins the world on its axis. In so doing, it sweeps away all possibility, if not the hope, of the investigator being returned to the deafened and deafening respite of the everyday. “Was the world standing on its head?” he cries. “Where could I be? What could have happened?” (284).

It is right here, as we shall see, in being anxiously impelled across the furthest proximity to make sense of that which is without sense, and thus to construct an autobiographical narrative which must precisely narrate its own impossibility, that the cries of the investigator call forth an intensive correspondence with certain “biographical” texts of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jacques Derrida. He calls, that is, to Nietzsche’s preacher of the overhuman, who cries in his turn, “What is happening to me? ... What? Has the world not just become perfect?” (*Zarathustra*, 288), and to the

little female cat whose bottomless gaze is fixed upon Derrida's nakedness. In exploring these animal encounters, and as the investigator's account exemplifies, I will thus argue in the next section that they necessarily can only take place, as Derrida writes, "under the species of the nonspecies, in the formless, mute, infant, and terrifying form of monstrosity" ("Structure, Sign and Play," 370).

### Thinking through great nausea

Here, we begin to approach our central question, this Kafkan, this Nietzschean question: how might the unrecognisable, unheard-of relation be recorded? how might the senseless interval come to make sense, perhaps even to *create* sense? How might the as yet formless form of monstrosity come to be reenacted, insofar as its sense can only be that of the taking place of sense prior to its recognition? How, in short, might one recognise the unrecognisable, think the unthinkable?

For Nietzsche, as we know, it is a question of an affirmative response to the inartistic, reactive violence of habit and of moral calculation. Such is the unheard-of correspondence which marks the "unique and entirely individual original experience" (*TL*, 83) that "is" being as such in an *announcing* which exceeds every determinable form. Such "originality" is never creation *ex nihilo*, however, but rather that of a forbidden metonymy remarking an unheard *relation*. Such is the becoming perceptible of that which "has no name as yet and hence cannot be mentioned although it stares us all in the face" (*The Gay Science*, §261). It is the demand, in short, of that which habit serves to render insensible: the irruptive return of the effaced and the defaced.

Such an announcing which calls forth a creative co-responding is located, Nietzsche tells us, in the spacing, the play, *between* the two forms of nihilism. Between, that is, the rational man who negates the world in positing suprasensory utopian ideals, and the last man who, recognising that truth and value are all too human constructions, negates the world in advocating the parodic play of cynical self-interest.<sup>55</sup> Moreover, its interval, its interruption, at once moves *before* and *beyond* the "great nausea" of nihilism (*Genealogy*, II:24) in and as the moment which a being

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<sup>55</sup> See, for example, *The Gay Science*, §346.

opens itself beyond itself, thus giving itself to that which has been excluded in the production of sense and thus value. Such is the becoming-together of a forbidden phrasing, of an unheard-of metonymy which shatters the habitual conceptual shackles which order the sensible world.

The event that an unheard-of combination remarks is thus, in being prior to anything recognisable, an opening to that upon which the two forms of nihilism *depend*. As an announcing which opens a space and a time for the coming into being of previously foreclosed relations, the Nietzschean ethical aesthetic thus refuses to allow life to harden into one sclerotic possibility and in one configuration, it grants life, as Heidegger says, “its inalienable right to become” (*Nietzsche*, II:126).

The question then—the question which, for Kafka’s canine investigator too, as we will see, is the mark of responsible conduct—is the question of an autocritical imperative that returns eternally, that is, of *a permanent revolution that ever questions* and which, in so doing, *creatively* transforms. It is this intensive creative tension between *being* and *becoming*, between the habitual and the forbidden or foreclosed, which calls forth a response by which a being outlives and thus affirms.

Given that the positing of a previously unheard-of combination reinscribes that which has been elided by habitual recognition, any such positing must thus perform a rupture within the familiar. It must, that is to say, disclose a lacuna within the known, and in this way it necessarily interrupts the proper ordering of a certain state of affairs. One thus understands why it is at once both insensible *and* forbidden, and why it is necessarily monstrous in the sense of an aberration within the order of things.

This is not to suggest, however, that the encounter which for strategic reasons I am calling *animal*—the singularity of that encounter *as such*—is thus in some “sense” disclosed. Rather, as we shall see, being as such must always already withdraw in and as a call which announces only an unnameable monstrosity, and which, insofar as it remains unnameable, can call forth only a meaningless metonymy in its place. This placeholder figure explicitly refuses any and all identity in bringing to its senses the delirious mute call of that which the habitual reproduction of sense renders insensible. In being called forth to hold open this space of the “new,” however, such an improper placeholder is nonetheless constrained to “materialise” in the borrowed costume of the old—constrained, that is, to *dress improperly*. It is this constraint

which, as we will see, is both the condition of every revolutionary invention and that which ensures its parodic, nihilistic recuperation.

Furthermore, I will argue, it is exactly this creative becoming of an animal encounter which renders it *unthinkable* that living beings can be put to death with impunity. That is, in contrast to the dissimulating “nakedness” of the “pure” concept, it is only in the thickness and impropriety of its dress that the chance *address* from an other might arrive to interrupt the murderous theatrics of animalisation.<sup>56</sup> Such is the improper dress and address of an animal.

“Nakedness,” as we have seen, implies the reactive authority of judgment for Kafka’s investigator, and indeed, it is the “nakedness” of truths which function to place the apodicticity of authority beyond question. Finally, the possibility of being naked constitutes yet one more of those “propers” which supposedly separate the human from the nonhuman animal. Playing on these figures somewhat, I suggest that only inasmuch as the revolutionary placeholder remains *between* senses, that is, only as long as it remains improperly dressed, it is therefore “*animal*,” only becoming “*human*” insofar as its obscure thickness congeals to form that apparent transparency common to both habit and parody. Such transparency which is, in other words, the naturalising and thus normative function of “nakedness.”

### Thinking nonsense

As we have seen, the tropology of sense is not *substitution* but rather *constitution* of being. Every passion, being a moment and movement of translation, is at once an act of interpretation, just as every action is at once dependent upon a passive infolding of externality. This blinding, deafening, benumbing reproduction of sense necessarily places *every* living being, who is never an *organism* nor even necessarily *organic*, always already “in” language. Moreover, making sense presupposes machines of habitual recognition inhabited by power that are both constitutive of bodyings and coextensive with the reproduction of *materialisation*. Feminist philosopher Judith Butler very clearly demonstrates the operation of the latter in her exploration of the indissociability of the materiality of sex and the discursive construction of gender. In

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<sup>56</sup> See, for example, *The Gay Science*, §352. Also, see “Nakedness, Dress” in Sarah Kofman *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, 81-100.

contrast to a simple conflation of “matter” with “reality,” Butler rightly insists that we should not think of matter “as site or surface, but as as process of materialisation that stabilises over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface *we call matter*” (*Bodies that Matter*, 9; my emphasis). In this we can better understand the indissoluble imbrication of language, power, and bodyings, with iterability as its shared condition. While the fixity of a body is indeed fully material, as Butler continues, *materiality* must rather be thought “as power’s most productive effect” (2). Indeed, the very materiality which reiterates the common sense boundary of “the organism” is itself one such effect as well as the gauge of its investiture with power relations (37).

In this idealisation of iterability, the singularity of a given being is thus necessarily and violently covered over, elided in its very making sense. It is this which constitutes the possibility of “disciplining” a body. In that dominant structures of meaning determine both that which does *and* which does not “make sense” in a given context, everyday being-in-the-world must thus be understood as an exclusion or excision from the *means* of making sense, an alienation from any *will* to recognition, as it is precisely by way of this *prior* exclusion from the means of making sense that the “agential” subject is constituted.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, however, the *immediate* perception of *this* uniquely situated *relation* of being, that which Nietzsche calls the “entirely individual original experience” (*TL*, 83), equally necessarily reserves itself *as* withdrawn, and in so doing remains to haunt every ideality as the spectral trace within every repetition. Such is the “pure reserve” of unlivable excess which outlives every determinable form.<sup>58</sup>

Here we find the two distinct but indissociable sites of non-sense briefly alluded to previously. On the one hand, the necessary withdrawal of being as such which is the condition of the production of sense (the *taking* place of language) and, on the other, the singular differences of a situated encounter which are violently elided in the recognition of its sense (language having always already *taken* place). In one sense

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<sup>57</sup> It is in this context that one should read Nietzsche on “originality” in *The Gay Science*, §261.

<sup>58</sup> This “event” of singular reserve is, as Deleuze and Guattari write, “the part that eludes its own actualisation in everything that happens. The event is not a state of affairs. It is actualised in a state of affairs, in a body, in a lived, but it has a shadowy and secret part that is continually subtracted from or added to its actualisation ... it is a virtual that is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract ... The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure *reserve*” (*What is Philosophy?* 156).

then, while the impossible event of *infinite* being as such necessarily withdraws in the everyday *finite* state of affairs, it is nonetheless the former which effaces itself in giving itself in and as the latter. At the same time, however, these two sites are absolutely heterogeneous in that the making *sense* of every being, and thus of the violent exclusion of singularity, precisely remarks a sense of the temporal, that is to say, an historically contingent time of sense. In the former then, being as such is already *no longer* perceptible in its being recognised, whereas in the latter being as such is always *not yet* perceptible, the reserve of pure potentiality.

Given power's investiture in the habitual effacement of difference that constitutes the possibility of making sense, the unlivable excess of pure reserve can necessarily be "actualised"—as we saw with both Heidegger and Nietzsche in the previous chapter—only *as* withdrawn. It manifests itself, that is to say, *as* meaning without sense (content) and *as* sense (sensibility) without meaning. As the sense only of being without sense, of the singular laying claim of being as such, it is thus a purely formal telling only of itself, one which exceeds every structure of meaning upon which its affective manifestness nevertheless depends. In this, the call of an impossible, singularly situated encounter potentially comes to be heard. A call which compels a becoming-other which cannot be predicted from within the everyday state of affairs it interrupts, and which in so doing violently dis-locates the certainty of being the "I" that "is," the latter referring both to the secure sense of self *as* self, *and* to the surety of repose within the world.

We are now better placed to understand why it is that that intervallic encounter in and as which Kafka's investigator comes to be simultaneously throws this newly investigative "I" outside of "the ordinary, calm, happy life of every day" ("Investigations," 286). Moreover, the *canicentric* interruption of an exceptional hubris enacted by Kafka's autoheterobiography recalls us to the fact that, given that this "I" potentially marks any being constituted in and as recognition, the violent interruption of sense does *not* presuppose human consciousness as its condition, nor indeed any form of egological consciousness.

Rather, withholding itself in giving itself, the encounter is that which necessarily exceeds *all* recognition and which is at once always already prior *to* recognition. Never the impossible truth of the object therefore, the madness or *insensé* of originary composition is rather the spectre of pure potentiality haunting every actualisation. The spectre, in other words, of all that has been foreclosed by the

contingent reproduction of a caricatured materialisation (the blinding clarity of iterability) coextensive with its investiture with power, and at once of the truth of originary composition prior to any recognition as truth.<sup>59</sup> Always prior to the end effect of “Man” as the appearance of the lie within the concept of truth, being as such thus remains essentially other to truths and values, and thus to exclusion and demonisation. The spectre haunting every actualisation “is,” in short, the unlivable which outlives.

In the violent dislocation of sense without sense, the self-certain I is thus disposed *to* anxiety in being exposed in and as what Giorgio Agamben in his reading of Heidegger calls “the suspension and withholding of all concrete and specific possibilities” (*The Open*, 67). This is not, however, the *experience* of the disconcealing of pure potentiality as Agamben claims, but rather pure potentiality *as such*, and thus precisely that which “I” can never experience. Originary being-with prior to any recognition, and thus always prior to the constitution of the “human” or the “nonhuman,” “is” (and *is not*) absolute *inter*, no longer and not yet. Put more simply, in the infinite materiality of pure *potentiality* nothing can possibly *be*. The reserve of infinite not yet in its taking place which, in having already taken-place, is always no longer in every actualisation. In this, being as such is the im-possibility of being.

### Following the apocalypse

As the impossibility of possibility, infinite materiality is thus necessarily atemporal, ahistorical: *untimely*. The other of time, and thus heterogeneous to every state of affairs in which an “I” comes to be thrown, the disposing of being as such “is” therefore a maddening interlude *from* which an “I” can only return *to* anxiety, but never experience *as such*.

It is this “moment” of being thrown from infinite senseless madness to the “there” of a previously unrecognisable “I” which Derrida attempts to recall in a well-known passage from *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2006). Here, he relates the story of how, naked in his bathroom one morning, he encounters the “bottomless gaze [*regarde sans fond*]” of his female companion cat in “an instant of extreme passion” (12) which—

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<sup>59</sup> Hence “Culture” necessarily precedes humanity in every *sense* in the idealisation that is iterability, an ideality which at once installs machinic reaction at the heart of every response.



offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human: the inhuman or the ahuman, the ends of man, that is to say, the bordercrossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself. And in these moments of nakedness, as regards the animal, everything can happen to me [*tout peut m'arriver*], I am like a child ready for the apocalypse. *I am (following) the apocalypse itself* [*je suis l'apocalypse même*], that is to say, the ultimate and first event of the end, the unveiling and the verdict (12).

While there have been a number of recent interpretations of this passage,<sup>60</sup> they have generally tended to focus on the *gaze*, whilst overlooking the interrelation of the “I” and the apocalypse in the play of “*am [suis]*” and “*follow [suis]*.”<sup>61</sup> Such an omission, however, elides the very trace of that encounter which is otherwise being sought. In this animal encounter (in the double sense of an animal encounter *with* a nonhuman animal), the nonsubstitutable singularity of *this* female cat opens itself beyond itself in giving itself outside of the constitutive outside of the properly human. It is in this instant of extreme *passion*, of absolute receptivity, that everything *can* happen but within which no *one* possibility, no *one* configuration can be *actualised*.

The encounter, that is to say, “takes place” in the pure potentiality of the *not yet taken place*, within the apocalyptic suspension of every actualised possibility, but as such can only be called forth by an “I” insofar as its encounter “is” *no longer*. In other words, insofar as I *am* the apocalypse [*je suis l'apocalypse*], this necessarily precludes every “I” [*je*], and inasmuch as I *am [suis]* this possibility, “I” can thus only ever *follow [suis]*. An “I,” in short, comes back to find itself only in the anxious trace or mark of the encounter’s having already taken place, hence “I” necessarily *follows* the apocalypse [*je suis l'apocalypse*].<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> See, for example, Matthew Calarco *Zoographies: The Question of the Animal from Heidegger to Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 121-126; Cary Wolfe “In the Shadow of Wittgenstein’s Lion” in *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1-58; and Donna J. Haraway *When Species Meet*, 19-23. See also Leonard Lawlor’s particularly interesting reading of the bathroom scene (74-7), which is the highpoint of his otherwise flawed book *This Is Not Sufficient: An Essay on Animality and Human Nature in Derrida* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

<sup>61</sup> As David Wills’ translation makes clear, Derrida plays throughout this passage on the shared first-person singular present form of the verbs *être* (to be) and *suivre* (to follow), both of which produce *suis*. Thus “*je suis*” can mean either *I am* or *I follow*, or, as here, both at once.

<sup>62</sup> On the normative yet paradoxical relation between nudity, shame, and guilt, see Derrida *The Animal*, 4ff. Particularly interesting in the context of this bathroom encounter is the absolute uncertainty of both sexual and species difference, Derrida being unable to say, with the bottomless gaze of the female cat focused upon his genitalia, if he is naked and ashamed *like*

Moreover, this *marking*, this trace of absolute disposition, thus *remarks*, that is, makes manifest, that which was previously foreclosed: a *manifesto* in its most literal sense. Such is its unnameable proclamation and appeal *as yet* without meaning, a sense *as yet* without sense, one which nonetheless violently calls forth its own monstrous and terrifyingly unknowable coming to be. A sense of without sense is, in other words, the trace of that which cannot be made sense *of* within the dominant structures of intelligibility-materialisation. Responding to this call, the “I” that comes back to itself is therefore an other, obligated in being exposed in and as a call which demands a response that exceeds all knowledge, which refutes every certainty and surpasses self-understanding. Following the apocalypse, in other words, the force and the forces of the world undermine every attempt at capture.

Moreover, having withdrawn in proclaiming its mark of the habitually unheard and forbidden, the violent encounter ever again reserves itself as infinite potentiality. It forever remains to come, to eternally return, insofar as it gives itself in tracing itself only as a future present: that which will have been attested to by the anxiety of its “sense without sense.”

Hence, in Nietzsche’s parable of the eternal return “At Noontide” (*Zarathustra*, 287-9), Zarathustra is, like Kafka’s investigator, similarly thrown both from and to his senses in a violent seizure of attunement. “I know not how,” admits Zarathustra, “it inwardly touches me ... it compels me.” Such is the strange, utterly disorientating intoxication that is to fall into the well of eternity, into the “serene and terrible noontide abyss” that “is” the apocalyptic eternity of the world’s singular perfection, “is” the “golden round ring” of being as such. Returned to his senses, Zarathustra finds himself transformed, all prior certainty destroyed: “I spoke once and thought myself wise. But it was a blasphemy: I have learned *that* now.”

It should be noted, moreover, that there is nothing *human* to be found here, but only that which always remains to exceed the limit of “the Human.” That which is, Nietzsche writes, “[p]recisely the least, the gentlest, lightest, the rustling of a lizard, a breath, a moment, a twinkling of the eye” (288). Hence, those abyssal encounters between Zarathustra and his animals always take place in the infinite instant of

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an animal, that is, *like* a beast or, instead, *like* a man. It is a passage which I hope to engage with in more detail at a later date.

midday, “in” that very interval between moments which Heidegger describes as “unleash[ing] an essential image-generating force” (*Nietzsche*, II:46).<sup>63</sup>

In summary then, the announcing of an animal encounter marks the chance relating of this bodying to this other bodying, a relation which has been foreclosed within a given state of affairs. As such, its demand necessarily exceeds the ability of a given way of being to “make sense,” that is, it exceeds its capacity of recognition. That which cannot be heard, which is “unheard-of,” “forbidden” and “unmentionable,” must therefore announce itself in and as the return of the “I” only as a sense of the without sense. It proclaims, in short, that the fact that *this* other being has no sense is in itself an issue. In this way, the foreclosure or forbiddenness of its sense is *performed*. It is a performative, moreover, which at the same time discloses the limit not only *as* limit, but as *contingent* limit. Enacting thus the prison of enclosure and delimitation, its questioning of enforced limits is therefore indissociable from its remarking of the eventual withdrawal of being as such.

### **Invention of monstrosity, monstrosity of invention**

Having thus explored how an unrecognisable other comes to impose itself within a given state of affairs, we focus in this section on the necessary *monstrosity* of its coming. Irreducible to any species other than that which Derrida describes as “the species of the nonspecies,” such monstrousness is, as we shall see, nothing less than the mark of *invention*. In the final section of this chapter, I will then consider the implications of such creative monstrosities for liberal ideology and for the staging of animalisation, before concluding with a deafening yet inaudible dance, one which throws a young dog into the “peculiarity” of critique.

As we have seen, the trace of an encounter in its having taken place is the sense only of exclusion. Such is the mark of a present-absence or absent-presence, a ghostly apparition which announces the coming into being of spacing and articulation. Put another way, its sensible void marks the opening of a *space* of invention by which what is foreclosed can potentially be recognised, an invention which at the same time

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<sup>63</sup> “Image,” it should be remembered, is for Nietzsche the discontinuous tropological vehicle that makes *sense*, and hence I read Heidegger here as referring to the inventive *genesis* of sense.

is always haunted by the spectre of pure potentiality which withdraws in its coming to be. As the coming of something unrecognisable, of something unthinkable which cannot be, invention can only be monstrous, absolutely alien to all that is.<sup>64</sup> It is this which for Nietzsche constitutes the supreme creative event: in and as the *active* forgetting of extreme passivity, a monstrous proclamation demands its unheard-of coming to be.

In this uncanny animal encounter, this manifesto of making manifest, a new *transductive* being is created. That is, the “elements” of its unheard-of combination do not precede their relating, but rather can only be discerned retrospectively.<sup>65</sup> It is compounded, in other words, of *not* the I that I was, and of *not* the other that he/she/it was. This is exemplified for us by the encounter which, as we have seen, creates Kafka’s investigator, an encounter compounded of neither the young dog that “I” was, nor the “actual” dogs that they were. Not only then, is the exposing of its demand irreducible to its elements, as indeed is the case in every attunement by which beings are always already outside themselves, but also that its elements *as* elements do not exist prior to its singular ex-appropriation, that is, prior to their *being-with*. Rather than preceding its call, the “I” is always constituted anew in and as the address, just as that which is made manifest in being so marked does not preexist this relation *as such*.

Beings, in other words, do not precede the originary being-with that “is” being as such and which, as the condition of possibility for all individuation, necessarily precedes identity and substance.<sup>66</sup> This “other I” thus *bodies* (in the Heideggerian sense of passage and transmission) a transformed relationality, an intensive, maddening relation of forces which (a) being seizes and is seized by.<sup>67</sup> In and as the encounter, be it with the *regarde sans fond* of a “little cat” or with the shine upon an eye that is elided by that gaze, the “other I” thus *becomes* “animal” in the

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<sup>64</sup> On the necessary impossibility, and thus monstrosity, of invention, see Derrida “Psyche: Invention of the Other” trans. Catherine Porter *Psyche: Inventions of the Other Volume 1* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 1-48, a text which is fundamental to an understanding of Derrida’s philosophical project.

<sup>65</sup> The “unheardness” of such a becoming-together can therefore never be the simple “invention” of a portmanteau nor the estranging production of a surrealist montage. It is not a case, in other words, of placing together two or more recognisable elements in an unfamiliar relation, a calculated relation whose very unfamiliarity depends upon the *prior* sense of those elements being recognised as disparate.

<sup>66</sup> What I am calling the animal encounter, it should be clear, has therefore nothing to do with a human *imitation* of a nonhuman other, an imitation which thus presupposes prior identity.

<sup>67</sup> On this, see what Deleuze terms “nonorganic vitality” in “To Have Done with Judgment” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 126-135 (131).

sense that there can be nothing recognisable, nothing properly human (or, indeed, properly canine) in the attunement of an intensive composition which has no meaning. Such a composition, moreover, may irretrievably exceed a future reinscription of meaning, as we will discover in chapter five.

One only ever *calculates* the human, that is, “the human” is made calculable by way of a discursive abstraction constructed through the forgetting of differences that transfers radical particularity into that Nietzschean land of “ghostly schemata.” By contrast, an animal encounter is precisely that which interrupts its most proper of properties: a *nonhuman* moment that exceeds every stable delimitation of the self and any fixed contour of the body, and at once an *inhuman* movement through the technicity of language. In and as the encounter, a new yet historically contingent being is created: a monstrosity “under the species of the nonspecies” that demands only its own impossible possibility. Hence, we can better understand Nietzsche’s claim to “write for a species that does not yet exist” (*Will to Power*, §958). Here too, the distinction between “nonhuman” and “inhuman” is clear: “nonhuman” refers to all those billions of singular living beings, *constituted* by the making of sense, who are other than human, whereas “inhuman” refers to the radically a-human machinery of sense, the structure of language, which *constitutes* every living being.

The animal encounter which calls forth a radically new being must thus interrupt our regulative economies which otherwise *determine* a response (or, rather, a reaction). An inscription of pure language in and as its withdrawal, it necessarily cannot be said nor shown as it “is,” but rather can only be indicated precisely where and when it is not. In this, the call without sense is both apostrophe and ellipsis: a catastrophic interruption and at once a mark of withdrawal and of a disclosure by concealment, a wound in the economy of the Same.

The trace of the encounter is thus the giving of spacing and articulation, an opening of a space of recognition to-come and an opening in and of everyday time. An opening, that is to say, which disrupts the linear temporality reproduced by that idealisation of iterability which permits the identification of the same throughout possible repetitions, and which is indissociable from the sedimentation that constitutes historicity. In this, the trace of the withdrawal of being as such constitutes a *temporal* irruption within the everyday *spatialisation* of time (i.e., temporality constructed as a linear series of discrete and bounded “now’s”).

As a result, its irruption is forced, as we will see, to don a prosthetic from the past in order to preserve this untimely becoming-time of space and becoming-space of time. In so doing, moreover, it necessarily stages an intensive metonymic correspondence as the result of its catachrestic positing within improper contexts. This inventive interruption of the linearity of time is, in other words, the becoming-sensible of that which is not possible, in being excluded from “making sense,” within a given state of affairs. As such, it puts into question both the calculability of linear time, and the previously apodictic propriety of the prevailing order.

Once again, however, it must be recalled that what I insist on calling the *animal* encounter can never be restricted to the *human* animal: both as that which always already exceeds “the human,” and as that from which a nonhuman *in her, his, or its ways of being* can never be excluded, just as she, he, or it can be excluded neither from time nor from historicity.<sup>68</sup> Such is the habitual making of sense, as explored in our earlier discussion of Nietzsche, and which he also calls *memory*: “the quantity of all experiences of all ... life, alive, self-ordering, mutually forming each other, competing with each other, simplifying, condensing and transforming into many different unities. There must exist an inner *process*, which proceeds like the formation of concepts [*Begriffsbildung*] out of many singular cases [*Einzelfällen*].”<sup>69</sup> Put simply, something new comes into being without as yet making sense. While this something new could be an encounter which transforms this “Derrida’s” way of being, or this “Investigator’s” way of being, it could equally well be something new which transforms this cat’s or this troupe of elephants’ ways of being within a given state of affairs. Either or both, such inter- and intra-species encounters may call the new into the ways of being *this* nonhuman animal without ever encountering a human way of being, and vice versa, or neither, or both.

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<sup>68</sup> This specificity, however, is not to suggest that nonhuman animals are therefore excluded from *historiology*, of which one example will for the moment suffice. In 1919, farmers attempted to murder 140 elephants from the South African park of Addo, of which between sixteen and thirty survived. Even today, recounts Barbara Noske, the Addo elephant group is “mainly nocturnal and responds extremely aggressively to any human presence ... they obviously have transmitted information about our species even to calves of the third and fourth generation, none of whom can ever have been attacked by humans” (*Beyond Boundaries*, 111-2). These elephants are thus “the cultural heirs of the fear and hatred among their ancestors for our species” (155). This also, in reference to Derrida’s point regarding the necessary link between transgenerational transmission, law, and therefore crime and peccability, appears to mark an elephant social *taboo*.

<sup>69</sup> *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 11:26; cit. Lemm, 134.

## Exclusions and inaugural citations

Where then, does this notion of monstrous invention leave us as regards the place of nonhuman animals in relation both to the economy of animalisation, and to the ideology of liberal individualism? Most obviously, its mute announcing addresses itself to those founding exclusions upon which the “inclusive” ideology of liberal “consensus” depends and, more generally, to that which is habitually excluded in the order and the ordering of a given state.

More than this, however, its anarchic call to *disorder* in fact makes *perceptible* the whole murderous theatrics of animalisation, that is, the machinic reproduction marshalling that which, in the Introduction, I called *the economy of genocide*. Animalisation, as we have seen, consists of the reductive reconfiguration of a constructed “identity” as “animal” which, figured along a humanist teleological dialectic, is thus considered synonymous with “subhuman.” It is, in other words, the institutional reproduction of materialisation, determined within dominant relations of power, by which singular situated “bodyings” are written over and thus excluded from making sense. An economy, moreover, which in the modern era is in large part reducible to the demands of Capital. In this, as we shall see in the final chapter, the animal encounter is necessarily *anti-capital*, be it national or international, intellectual, biomedical, or the “simple” economics of subsistence.

Within the terms laid out in this thesis, this movement of sedimented traces by which other bodies are constituted as killable can thus be understood as a *reactive* ordering of the sensible. In this, an habitual *misrecognition* is produced which, in dogmatically predetermining the sense of an encounter prior to its taking place, essentially prevents that encounter from taking place, whilst at the same time reproducing the “proper” limit of the human collective. In contrast to the tropological displacement of animalisation, however, the call without sense is the call of and to tropes *which function in precisely the opposite direction*. Rather than reductive metaphors and anthropomorphisms of “proper” identity, they mark instead the coming to be of improper animal relations which make it *unthinkable* that other living beings—whether human or nonhuman—can be put to death with impunity.

These tropes will be explored in detail in the next chapter, but we can already begin to understand how it is the creative-destructive positing of Nietzschean *irony*

which permits the untimely call without sense to become *sensible*, that is, which makes it possible to constitute an *effect*. As that which does not mean what it says, only an ironic figure can perform, and thus form, materialise or manifest, that terrifying demand and meaningless compound which marks only the sense of exclusion. Furthermore, as inaugural *and* citational, the impossibility of such tropes is the impossibility of invention itself, that is, of being necessarily a repetition in order to *make* sense and at the same time absolutely other to that which is possible within a given state of affairs.

For an example of this impossibly improper figure, a figure whose very impropriety in another sense renders every example impossible, we need only to return to the neutral “it” of Kafka’s overwhelmed listener, exposed in the zoogenetic interval between dog and investigator. As we have seen, the narrator of Kafka’s heterobiography comes to be only *following* an intoxicated interval between first-persons. Hence, the investigating “I” can only call forth the encounter with what may or may not be seven dogs by way of the placeholder marker of the neutral third-person. Prior to sense, this caesura “is” thus a nonmoment which essentially does not take *place*, and thus there can be no *sense* of the encounter in and as which the investigator has always already come to be.

Nevertheless, this is *not* to say that the encounter henceforth remains indescribable. Rather, I have argued, its call without sense is precisely the opening of a space in which the unnameable—that unmentionable which stares us in the face—may come to being. How then, does the investigator-narrator *reenact* the event? This is indeed our question for the remainder of this chapter and all of the next. How, in other words, does a body *reconstitute* its purely formal trace of nothing that is being, and which is not nothing? How to re-articulate that which, in its calling forth or conjuring up of a nonmoment in and as which “I” is other, is both the condition of possibility of autobiography and at once its impossibility?

The investigator, we discover, can recall the encounter only in calling up an impossible simultaneity: that of a violently inaudible blast of sound, of determined silence and strident, ear-rending music.

[The seven dogs] did not speak, they did not sing, they remained generally silent, almost determinedly silent; but from the empty air they conjured music. Everything was music, the lifting and setting down of their feet, certain turns of the head, their running and their standing still ... this blast



of music ... seemed to come from all sides ... blowing fanfares so near that they seemed far away and almost inaudible ("Investigations," 281-2).

Just as the neutral "it" holds the impossible grammatical place of the (non)subject, we thus find that the animal encounter takes on an improper metonymy which *holds* and *marks* the place of the impossible (non)event. It is, in other words, to "clothe" an event which has neither spatiality nor temporality and which disrupts *without limit* the autobiographical narrative. Here then, is the borrowed costume, the senseless "dressing" of an improper metonymy: such is the silent *and at once* clamorous music without which "the creative gift" of the canine race cannot come to make sense, cannot be *heard* (281). The improper, placeholder metonymy, in other words, marks a deafening interval within the deafness of the everyday.

#### 4. “We are all German Jews”: Dressing Improperly, 1968

##### Introduction

The question of this chapter, as we know, concerns the way in which the untimely call without sense takes on a borrowed metonymical costume in order that its demand might constitute an effect. This question will be explored directly through an explication of the political force of the impossible performative “We are all German Jews [*Nous sommes tous des juifs allemands*]” enacted in France in 1968, paying particular attention to its relation to what Jacques Rancière calls *assujettissement* or “subjectivisation.”

Put simply, I will argue that it is only by taking on the “technical prosthesis” of just such a borrowed costume that an encounter’s demand comes to be preserved, a preserving which makes possible the chance of fighting a dominant power for the past. Historically contingent, the ghostly announcing of the encounter in this way takes on a *material* form. A coming to being which, through its staging of an intensive metonymic corresponding with the past which refutes all historicist reduction, enables it to have an effect in and upon the world by putting to work *otherwise* the machinery of sense. It is in this way, as we shall see, that such tropes function in precisely the opposite direction to animalisation, interrupting its genocidal economy.

Following the apocalyptic encounter which interrupts the linear time of the everyday, while it is the mute call which marks its opening as the *taking* place of time, it is by contrast the “preserving” metonymy which, in having always already *taken* place, *constitutes its own* time and space. In this way, that which the prevailing order must exclude comes to be reinscribed *as* the outside of that order and thus, outside of consensual reflection, as a division *within* that ordered state of affairs. This is not to suggest, however, some kind of transcendence of the everyday. Rather, the revolutionary positing of an improper, placeholding metonymy, as a catachrestic reinscription which refuses complete subsumption to the Same, is necessarily immanent to sedimented power relations. This is simply because the necessity of our

passive being-thrown must already preserve just such a chance encounter of material imposition, a necessary chance which interrupts the habitual *reproduction* of sense.

### **Rancière: proximity and unbridgeable distance**

One of the few political theorists to take serious account of deconstruction, Jacques Rancière too is concerned with the staging of a revolutionary performative which allows those who do not “count” within a given state of affairs to make sense. In this, Rancière’s position is, as we shall see, closely allied to my own. In other ways, however, our positions are diametrically opposed. First of all, the place of the encounter is, for Rancière, an *essentially* human domain dependent upon “the desire to engage in reasoned discourse” which thus disqualifies nonhumans as potential participants.<sup>70</sup> Secondly, and perhaps as a result of these differing starting points, we reach different conclusions regarding the relation of the event to the revolutionary performative, as this chapter will show. Nevertheless, the proximity of Rancière’s position will hopefully serve here to further clarify my own.

For Rancière, and in contrast to the police order which “arranges that tangible reality in which bodies are distributed in community,” political activity is “whatever shifts a body from the place assigned to it or changes a place’s destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen ... it makes understood as discourse what was once only heard as noise” (*Disagreement*, 28, 30). One can thus clearly understand why for Rancière the task of philosophy is necessarily political when he asserts that thinking is always a “rethinking,” that is, “an activity that displaces an object away from the site of its original appearance or attending discourse” (“Dissenting Words,” 120).

Political philosophy, in other words, is concerned with active *restaging*, or *assujettissement* (subjectivisation), a process by which, in and as the enactment of a revolutionary performative, those “outcasts” who are “denied an identity in a given order of policing” thus come to be perceived as viable discursive beings (Rancière “Politics,” 61). In short, politics, as opposed to policy, consists of making sensible that

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<sup>70</sup> This was Rancière’s response to the question as posed by Jane Bennett at a conference at Goldsmiths College in 2003. See Bennett *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 106.

which is insensible within a given state of affairs. Hence, political *activity* is the coming to be sensible of any and all bodies rendered invisible and voiceless within a given police order. The question then, is *how*, and under what conditions, those “bodies” which, reproduced as invisible, senseless noise according to a historically contingent “distribution of sensible,” thus come to *make* sense.

According to Rancière, such a process of politics can never consist of “an act of an identity,” but is rather “the formation of a one that is not a self but is the relation of a self to an other” (60). The “process of disidentification” (61) is, in other words, dependent upon a trope “that links the name of a group or class to the name of no group or no class, a being to a non-being or a not yet being” (61). Things are not so simple, however, in that this “does not mean the assumption of a different identity or the plain confrontation of two identities” (62). In other words, it can neither be a metaphorical claim to another’s identity (whether directly or as their representative), nor the unfamiliar juxtaposition of two previously recognisable (“proper”) identities, a calculated relation whose very unfamiliarity, as we know, depends upon the prior sense of the elements being recognised.

Rather, writes Rancière, such an “impossible identification” takes place only as “an interval or gap: being *together* to the extent that we are *between*—between names, identities, cultures, and so on” (62). It is then, a being-together in and as a relation to an other that *is not*, or not *yet*, that is, the “heterological enactment” of an *improper metonymy* whose elements do not precede their relation in that it is at once “the denial of an identity given ... by the ruling order of policy” (64). The condition of possibility for this heterological enactment is precisely *iterability*. This is because it is iterability which ensures that the dissemination of a “series of words” cannot be controlled, insofar as any such series is “equally available both to those entitled to use it and those who are not” (“Dissenting Words,” 116).<sup>71</sup>

The enactment of an improper metonymy is, as Rancière asserts, nothing less than the “creative activity of invention that allows for a redescription and reconfiguration of a common world of experience” (116). For him, this is exemplified *par excellence* by the affirmation in 1968 of an impossible identification with a

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<sup>71</sup> Rancière, however, would argue that it is what he calls *literarity*, rather than iterability, which ensures such dissemination and at the same time reserves it for the human alone. See “Dissenting Words,” 115.

number of Algerians beaten to death and dumped in the Seine by the police seven years earlier. “We could not,” writes Rancière,

identify with those Algerians, but we *could* question our identification with the “French people” in whose name they had been murdered ... we could act as political subjects in the interval or the gap between two identities, neither of which we could assume. The process of subjectivisation had no proper name, but it found its name, its cross name, in the 1968 assumption “We are all German Jews”—a “wrong” identification (“Politics,” 61).

Here, there are obvious similarities between that which Rancière understands as the process of *assujétissement*, and that unrecognisable being-with which I have described as an animal encounter, as shown most clearly in the example of Kafka’s young dog. The latter, as we recall, is thrown from his self into an interval between the youth he was and the investigator he will become. Nevertheless, a number of difficulties remain concerning Rancière’s accounts of the political positing of an impossible identification.

In the first place, Rancière does not give us to understand exactly *how* that restaging comes to be, nor of the efficacy of its becoming. He does, however, suggest that *assujétissement* consists not simply of “unentitled” speech acts, but also of a mimicking of the existing discourse of power, for which the secession of the Roman plebeians serves as his primary example. Thus, states Rancière, it is “necessary to invent the scene upon which spoken words may be audible, in which objects may be visible, and individuals themselves may be recognised” (“Dissenting Words,” 116). Such an invention, he argues, establishes another distribution of the sensible by executing “a series of speech acts that mimic those of the patricians” (*Disagreement*, 24).

It is difficult to know if this is exactly the *same* process of subjectivisation as “We are all German Jews,” but it is nonetheless clear that it similarly involves the invention of an improper metonymy, the positing of the same “we are and are not.” Such a performative, however, points to a *prior* coming to one’s senses otherwise which, only in its having already *taken* place, at once calls forth the mime. That is to say, the plebeians’ coming to a sense of themselves as beings whose “right” to make sense has been previously elided, and thus of a division within the State, must have *already* taken place. It is rather the case that the posthumous, post-apocalyptic sense of being without sense is precisely the call and manifesto—the *assujétissement*—which

precedes any such placeholder “prosthesis.” It is, in other words, the prior *condition* of the borrowed costume that is the “cross” name.

Hence, whereas a restaging for Rancière is that human speech act which shifts a body outside ordered distribution by its making sensible the previously insensible, I would argue that such political restaging is rather the *preservation* of the encounter’s call. The meaningless metonymic placeholder, in other words, constitutes the time and space of an encounter which has *already* taken place, and which is staged by a being who has *already* come to be outside of an ordered state of affairs. I shall endeavour to clarify this further in the next section through the frame of Rancière’s privileged example.

### **“We are all German Jews”**

In order to understand the efficacy of the improper metonymy “We are all German Jews,” it is thus necessary to focus not solely on its positing, but also on that which constitutes its condition of possibility. First of all, its chance paradoxically resides in the very relations of power it puts into question. This is because the excess of an encounter is always and only that which exceeds the proper identification demanded by institutionalised, yet historically contingent, recognition. Here then, a singular encounter with the abject materiality of the dead Algerians comes to dislocate the recognisable “I.” In other words, the anxious call of both its insensibility and at once the sense of its sense having being effaced, thus dis-locates the sense of a delimited self exposed within a shared community affect, in this instance “the French people.” This “sense without sense” can necessarily mark only its absence of content in its being *prior* to any possible referent and thus, in its interruption of the habitual interpretations inhabited by dominant relations of power, “I” comes to be other, falling in the interval between two identities: no longer a recognisable “I” and not yet a recognisable other. Hence, that which Rancière neatly describes as “the paratactic logic of a ‘we are *and* are not’” (“Politics,” 62) can be understood as synonymous with the phrase “I is other.”

In short then, being *this* being encountering an excessive withdrawal of sense in the singularity of its being-there-in-relation to the murdered Algerians, forces its “I” *from* the self-certainty of familiar repose, and *to* that anxiety which marks, and is

indissociable from, the impossible irruption of the as such, of the *taking* place of sense, within the everyday.

All this then, is prior to the actual positing of an improper metonymy which rather *preserves* that monstrous call of a time and space to come. A preserving, in other words, of “the advent of thinking for those who were not initially destined to think” (Rancière “Dissenting Words,” 121). Insofar as the encounter can be apprehended only *as* meaning without sense (content) and *as* sense (sensibility) without meaning, its *making* sense permits only and always an inaugural *citation*, an ironic positing whereby the unheard-of combination becomes sensible. Explicitly put *in the place* of that unnameable which withdraws, such a meaningless placeholder explicitly refuses identity, mimesis and surrogacy. Instead, it preserves the having come to being of a space and a time of becoming which, while (the) outside of a given state of affairs, nevertheless resonates *within* that state of affairs.

Monstrous and unnameable, the call without sense must thus take on a borrowed costume in order to be. It must, in other words, take on the languages, senses and conventions of the old in order to compose an improper past-future *metonymy* which marks the irruption of the new in its positing within contexts where it has not previously belonged. In so doing, its inaugural citation necessarily interrupts the economy of substitution, that is, of *metaphor* as understood within the discipline of rhetoric as an identification of one thing with another (this is that). Only in this way is an opening of the time-space of the new preserved.

In this, “We are all German Jews” is an intensive, nondialectical corresponding with the past, that is, it possesses neither a proper nor a figurative *sense* but only the intensity of beings improperly resonating together, past and future. The dislocating trace, in order to preserve its own time and space to come, thus calls to an *untimely* deterritorialisation of sense which, dependent upon the fact that the context of a phrasing is never fully determined, thus functions as a catachrestic reinscription.<sup>72</sup> The “impossible” sense of the enactment “We are all German Jews” thus constitutes at once an intensive relation and a restaging, and it is through the prosthesis of such a borrowed costume that the necessary countersignatures of recognition are gained.

Dressed thus in an improper metonymy, the mute manifesto of a content-less relation, which Rancière describes as “being *together* to extent that we are *in between*”

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<sup>72</sup> Hence the plebeians can only catachrestically mimic, and in so doing transform, an improper positing in order for it to be recognised.

(“Politics” 62), comes to being, becomes manifest. Hence, the “borrowed costume” can be neither an imitation nor a calculation “for the benefit of” or “on behalf of” that *with which* it comes to be, which would presuppose a preceding identity. In Rancière’s words, it is neither the “assumption of a different identity [n]or the plain confrontation of two identities” (62).

In order to understand the *efficacy* of this preserving, however, it is necessary to leave Rancière for a moment and turn instead to what Karl Marx calls, in contrast to the walking ghosts of nihilistic parody, the recovery of the spirit of revolution. Here too, we discover a point of contact, a co-respondence, with Nietzsche and the announcement of the overhuman which outlives every determinable form.

### **The spirit of revolution**

In the famous opening passages of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), Marx writes of those bodies which, never the liberal subjects of free will, instead find themselves only in being displaced, never making history “under circumstances they themselves have chosen, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past” (146).<sup>73</sup> The relation of a body to the world is, in other words, delimited by the idealisation of iterability, that is to say *historicity*, and thus the making of sense always *precedes* the exposing in and as which a being comes to be. As a result, “making history” is at once the necessity and the impossibility of the new:

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the minds of the living. And, just when they appear to be engaged in the revolutionary transformation of themselves and their material surroundings, in the creation of something which does not yet exist, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up [*beschwören sie ängstlich*] the spirits of the past to their service; they borrow from them names, slogans and costumes so as to stage the new world-historical scene in this venerable disguise and borrowed language (146-7).

Employing the example of The French Revolution’s catachrestic donning of Roman costume, Marx here describes the necessity of borrowing the costumes of the past in

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<sup>73</sup> Translation modified here and throughout. On these passages in *Eighteenth Brumaire*, see also Derrida’s reading in *Spectres of Marx*, 133-145.



order for that transformation to be *staged*. A borrowing, moreover, which is *subsequent* to the revolutionary transformation which has already “appeared.” In other words, in order for the new to stage its until then only *potential* efficacy in the world, it must improperly take on, i.e., *restage*, costumes borrowed from the past. Prior to this necessity, which is another way of noting the impossibility of the appearing coming to be *as such*, any “engaged” living beings only *appear* to have been transformed, without producing any material effect.

The material transformation thus occurs only with a reconfiguration of both an earlier time and another language, that is to say, with a reactivation of spectral sediments in an anxious process of “world-historical necromancy [*Totenbeschwörung*]” (147). In these revolutionary restagings,

the resurrection of the dead served to exalt the new struggles, rather than to parody the old, to exaggerate the given task in the imagination, rather than to flee from solving it in reality, and to recover the spirit of the revolution, rather than to set its ghost walking again (148).

Here then, Marx points to two different ways of restaging the past. On the one hand, we find a recourse to the ghost of parody which flees the task of the new and, on the other, an anxious conjuration from unnameable monstrosity to a resurrected corpse which recovers the revolutionary spirit insofar as it exalts the new. I will return to this notion of parody in the next section, but for now we see that, for Marx, it is only with the latter that that which is not yet might come to be.

With this lively restaging of a corpse, and of the need to dress the revolutionary spirit in the clothes of the old and dead, we are thus recalled to Nietzsche’s affirmative *response*. As we have seen, such a response improperly stages the singular, unheard-of relation which does not live but rather only *out-lives* [*überleben*] every determinable form. It is this response which *materialises* the silent announcing of that which survives the properly human, and which Werner Hamacher acutely contends comes to be “only in the form of one who, having outlasted the death of its type, has returned to haunt the living: *a living corpse*” (“Disgregation,” 159; emphasis added). The posthumous, posthuman corpse thus out-lives its type and genus insofar as it exceeds its proper sense and limit. Having finitude as its condition, and hence a technics as and at the origin of life, we recall its “dangerous” reiteration is that which interrupts all life, and by which life out-lives itself.

In this, we can better understand how the affirmative turn of the phrase “We are all German Jews,” in that it returns as a *living* corpse, comes to interrupt the given state of affairs. It announces, in other words, the return of the repressed Algerian corpses in their being raised (again) and catachrestically posited within contexts where they had not previously belonged. In this way, they “out-live” their proper sense, that is, they outlive their habitual actualisation in a given state of affairs. Hence, it is the death machine of living being which, as both the condition of possibility of proprietary norms *and* of their “out-living,” thus enables the shattering return of the oppressed. *Such is a conjuration from unnameable monstrosity to resurrected corpse as a calling upon death to summon the future and invent the impossible.*

### **Ghosting the revolution**

It remains, however, to understand the distance and at once the proximity of this revolutionary necromancy to the walking ghost of parody. Here, it becomes necessary to recall with Marx Nietzsche’s specular figures of nihilism.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given both the tropological machinery of sense and the elliptical apostrophe of the call marking in anxiety the zoogenetic translation, the key to the difference between Marx’s revolutionary spirit and that of the walking ghost lies in their *tropes*. On the one side, we have the living corpse of catachrestic repetition and, on the other, parody. Parodic citation is, as we have seen, one of the two forms of nihilism Nietzsche seeks to move beyond. Figured by the “last man” as the advocate of the cynical play of relativism, parody consists of a play with habitual values in such a way as they become ghostly remains, albeit remains always haunted by the spirit of revolutionary invention they elide. In this, parody plays with *recognised* sense in a calculated game of exquisite corpse. It is this ghost of parody which Marx locates in the bourgeois society of post-revolutionary France:

Bourgeois society was no longer aware that the ghosts of Rome had watched over its cradle, since it was wholly absorbed in the production of wealth and the peaceful struggle of economic competition ... And its gladiators found in the stern classical traditions of the Roman republic the ideals, art forms and self-deceptions they needed in order to hide from themselves the limited bourgeois content of their struggles and to maintain their enthusiasm (*Eighteenth Brumaire*, 148).

Parody, a game which plays with ghosts so as to always *reproduce* an ashen corpse, is that which remains when the revolutionary restaging comes to be *a part of*, rather than *apart from*, a given state of affairs, its sense having being reinscribed. Moreover, it is a reinscription which must, given the necessary idealisation of iterability, always already accompany the recovery of the revolutionary spirit in coming to be as a living corpse. Hence, given that this “‘still undrained, still unexhausted decay’ lives on” (Hamacher “Disgregation,” 160), we are returned to the Nietzschean imperative of an eternally returning autocritique. Here then, economic interest, that sedimented investiture of power effaced in actualisation, not so much takes on as necessarily *congeals* into a parody of revolutionary spirit. In this way, the last man and the walking ghost, through the ideality of iterability, together figure the utilitarian sedimentation by which a dominant power conserves its position.

For Marx, having witnessed “the ghost of the old revolution” which, from 1848 to 1851, “knew no better than to parody” (*Eighteenth Brumaire*, 148, 147), the circumvention of the indissociability of the revolution and its ghost could thus only be that most urgent of all concerns if the working class revolution was to *permanently* succeed. In this early stage of Marx’s project then, there is a fundamental difference between his conception of “ideology” and Nietzsche’s notion of “metaphysical fictions.”<sup>74</sup> It is this which places Nietzsche in opposition to the young Marx: whereas Marx’s world is hopeful for the future but joyless in the present, Nietzsche’s world, given that the overhuman remains always to come, is bereft of hope for the future but potentially filled with joy in the present. Opposites yes, yet both worlds are filled with fetishes and illusions it is necessary to over-come (Marx) or under-go (Nietzsche).

Concerned thus with how the revolutionary spirit might somehow maintain its exalting automanifestation in the world without succumbing to a parodic hollowing-out disguising cynical self-interest, the young Marx thus turns to the example of language itself. It follows from our argument thus far that, in order to avoid the reiteration by which the revolutionary citation becomes its own ghost, the improper

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<sup>74</sup> This is not to say, however, that the impossibility of circumvention is not disclosed by the later Marx. The dislocation of the intending subject, for example, as in the famous “personification” of capital (*Capital*, I:253-4 and III:403), necessarily demands a critique that remains vigilant to an originary technics. On this “spectrality of the rational” see, along with Derrida’s *Spectres*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak “Ghostwriting” in *Diacritics* 25:2, 65-84; and *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 76-84.

metonymy of the successful revolution to come must be utterly discontinuous with the past, that is, it must thus refuse the possibility of reiteration. Hence Marx speaks of *the language of revolution*, arguing that while “the beginner who has learned a new language always retranslates it into his mother tongue,” such a language “can only be said to have appropriated the spirit of the new language and to be able to produce in it freely when he can manipulate it without reference to the old” (146-7). The improper metonymy by which the future revolution preserves itself must, in other words, *no longer relay* the old, must no longer be haunted by the past from which it is excised in being transformed.

In this way, the power of a revolutionary positing must be utterly, i.e., *permanently*, discontinuous with any possibility of making sense within the given state of affairs it interrupts. It can, in Marx’s words, “only create its poetry from the future, not from the past. ... There the phrase transcended the content [*die Phrase über den Inhalt*]; here the content transcends the phrase” (149). The problem, however, is that for the “phrase” to be effective in the world, for it to *make sense*, it *must* relay the past, inasmuch as the making of sense in fact depends upon the indissociability of spirit and ghost, which is precisely the condition of its being-constituted. The “phrase,” in other words, is the having taken on of a materiality, an expropriation of form which, as with all forms, constitutes a mask. Such is the manifest dissimulation necessary to effect an efficacious restaging, and in this the improper metonymy must always transcend the content.<sup>75</sup>

Hence, whereas for Marx the revolutionary transformation is appropriated when “the new” is no longer marked in its difference and deferral, it is rather that this appropriation marks the *cooptation*, or reinscription, of its interruption within a state of affairs. It is the moment, in other words, when the idealisation of the phrasing allows for its parodic manipulation. Once again then, in becoming “naked”—becoming “*human*” in the figural sense I am employing it here—its excluded sense is disguised by an apparent transparency. Such is the walking ghost, a congealed clarity which dissimulates the impropriety of the address of an “animal” encounter.

In summary therefore, the revolutionary phrasing is the preserving of an encounter which, in borrowing the old clothes of the past, enacts a restaging in which

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<sup>75</sup> The term “phrase,” it must be recalled, does not necessarily refer to a human speech act, and thus it is important to hear within it many other kinds of phrasings, that is, other and others’ ways of *spacing*.

the new-old language *refuses* to make sense. Insofar as it remains *between* senses in this way, it *both no longer and not yet makes sense*, but rather constitutes a time-space of intensive correspondence. The sense of the materiality which exceeds its placeholder is thus, in Marx's terms, the content *outliving as* its phrase. Its power, in other words, resides in the *between* of sense, an indecipherable intervallic zone between negation and sublation which ruptures any possibility of synthesis.

However, whereas this inaugural improper metonymy is the interval, the between of dis-identification of which Rancière speaks, this disposition which marks the intensity of its coming to be must nonetheless inevitably become its own ghost. Becoming *naked*, transparent, the intensity of its improper clothes fades into nothingness, losing itself to the nihilistic parody of the last man. Derrida puts this succinctly when, in *Spectres of Marx*, he notes that as "soon as one identifies a revolution, it begins to imitate, it enters into a death agony" (144).

### **Viral micropolitics and genealogical conflagrations**

Returning to Rancière, we can now understand why the phrase "We are all German Jews," "the validity of which ... rest[s] entirely on the capacity to overturn the political relationship between the order of designations and that of events" (Rancière "Dissenting Words," 114), exists only as an intensive corresponding. It is *not*, in other words, a synthesis, but rather a *placeholder* whose invention marks, and is marked by, its intensity in holding open the "place" of the interval from and to which a being is recalled otherwise. Hence, as Rancière argues, the name always *finds itself*, that is, finds its "cross" or "wrong" name ("Politics," 61).

The improper metonymy is, in short, a *prosthesis*, a bandage and a mask of disconcealment which, making no sense, rather enacts an intensive resonance that is a making *sensible*. The *assujettissement* which Rancière locates with its constitutive declaration is precisely that which is *called forth* by the disorientating withdrawal of the animal encounter, its improper dressing that which effectively stages an intensive metonymic corresponding with the past. Constituting in this way its own time and space, it thus reinscribes *as* its divisive outside that which the prevailing order must exclude. It is, in other words, the staging of an unmentionable relation which, as Rancière attests, "is not a place for dialogue or a search for a consensus" (62).

In contrast to a reasonable application on the basis of prior identity, the performative affirmation of an improper metonymy demands only those affirmative countersignatures by which that exclusion is recognised. Its phrase resonates, intensifying and coalescing in an opposition, imposing its own sense differently and at once interpellating other beings which come to be in sharing the disorientating call of its encounter. This transformative force is not linear, it does not “catch fire.” Rather, its efficacy is the chance affect of a feverish disposition which may flare up in local conflagrations in and as an inhuman multitude inflamed by the prevailing order’s refusal to recognise its sense. Aesthetic in the Nietzschean sense of before and beyond any notion of taste and judgment, it is thus always already political in that it is other to the dominant culture of *recognised* value. It is, in short, the coming to be of a nonreactive, affirmative micropolitics which allows for a political ethics insofar as it operates without any kind of transcendence, that is, without any overarching control from above.

Moreover, the resonance of the phrasing is at once the opening of the space of a Nietzschean *genealogy*, of its mapping of a site of exclusion, in that the coming to be sensible at once marks its *prior* nonsensibility. That is, it makes legible its prior exscription from sense as an—*hitherto imperceptible*—operation of power. Thus, the inscription of and as the new is at once the possibility of a genealogical rearticulation which, in that making sense of a prior exclusion makes perceptible the economic interest concealed within the parodic citation of habitual values, calls others to an encounter with the force of the reinscribed exclusion.

In this way, the phrasing “We are all German Jews” is not only the placeholder of a new encounter, but also a genealogical opening in which can be made legible the investment of power in the prior exclusion of the newly sensible Algerian bodies. *It potentially makes perceptible, in other words, the local theatre of animalisation, and thus the machinery of constitutive exclusion.* In short, the placeholder improper metonymy enacts a restaging which constitutes both the resonance for further encounters to come, and a genealogical opening for a rethinking or restaging within historiological discourse. Heretic genealogies can thus be said to become perceptible in and as moments of time and repetition, reinscribing thus the temporal irruption within the everyday spatialisation of time through an account of its prior effacement. In this way such genealogies bear witness to that which remains

unrecognised in the founding and conserving of power. It is, therefore, both ethical and political.

### **Conclusion: from a happy life to a joyful one**

That which I have called an animal encounter can thus be summarised as a movement in two directions. On the one paw, it is the opening of a space and a time of recognition to come and, on the other, the opening of the past *as* the future by thinking what *takes place* today. To understand the efficacy of “We are all German Jews,” for example, or of the most proximal silence of the furthest deafening fanfare, it is therefore necessary to respond to the demands of its coming to being: What investment of reproduction, its silent, deafening compulsion, rendered its prior insensibility? What *use* does such an elision serve? Which figures organise the effect of foreclosure? and so on.

The space of genealogy is thus the chance to interpret and evaluate, in Deleuze’s words, the “truth of a thought ... according to the forces of power that determine it to think and to think this rather than that” (*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 97). As such, in disclosing “what forces are hiding themselves in the thought of *this* truth, and therefore what its sense and value is” (97), the genealogical space thereby offers a radical political historiology in that the making sense of the previously insensible demands an oppositional stance to the state of affairs that reproduced its exclusion. It is, in short, the redoubled space of *respond-ability*: the excessive recursivity between concept and singular experience, between deafness and the inaudible clamour of being-with. Only here, in and as this redoubled space, resides the potential of an emergent trajectory of escape.

At last then, in concluding this part let us consider once more the example of Kafka’s investigator which which it began. The investigator, we recall, having come to his senses following the intoxicating expropriation of the “I,” comes to a self that senses itself constrained by previously insensible limits. As a result of this, however, at the same time as the youth becomes an investigator he also finds himself irredemiably displaced from the “happy life” of the everyday. The animal encounter, in other words, calls *forth* the investigator as it at once demands *from* the investigator an indefatigable,

unending pursuit that is nothing less than an unending critique of theology, economics, politics and philosophy.

No longer insensible to the impositions and exclusions of knowing, the investigator is thus marked out by his disorientating encounter: “my peculiarities [*Sonderbarkeiten*],” he writes, “lie open to the day” (“Investigations,” 279). Thereafter, the investigator can maintain with his silence neither the nostalgic reactive longing for ecstatic communion nor the quietism of harmonious consensus which serves only to maintain the status quo. Rather, in becoming he is paradoxically compelled to always seek instead those irresistible [*unwiderstehlich*] encounters which “drive us again and again, as though by sheer force, out of our social circle” (280). He is compelled, in other words, to open his self to those encounters which drive us out beyond our all too canine, all too human limitations, and which make demands upon us beyond and before every proper delimitation of species. What is more, as Nietzsche would no doubt add, he is compelled to do so *joyfully*.



## Part Three: Ethics and Power

The “unrecognisable,” I shall say in a somewhat elliptical way, is the beginning of ethics, of the Law, and not of the human. So long as there is recognisability and fellow, ethics is dormant.

Jacques Derrida *The Beast and the Sovereign*

Whoever heard of an ironic ethics? Not an unserious question, for it may be the case that ethics can only be ironic, untimely, disguised and failing.

Avital Ronell *The Test Drive*

### Introduction: the fatal risk of the untimely

In the preceding chapters, we have seen that, like every concept, “the human” is a discursive abstraction constructed through the forgetting of difference and, as such, is reproduced to a degree as necessary and uniform. As a consequence, as Nietzsche tells us, “humanity” is “actually *made* calculable,” a calculability which has as its most fruitful effect “the *sovereign individual*, like only to himself” (*Genealogy*, II:2). This indissociability of the violence of making-calculable and the effect, and the efficacy, of sovereignty, should certainly give us pause. Another way of saying this would be that to be human is to come to being within, and as a consequence of, the vast machinery of making-sense-ability which conditions the visibility and viability of each and every social being. All social beings are, in short, the result of habitual practices of long-standing cultural formations congealed in and as the languages they inhabit and which inhabit them. This “already-there” which, prior to its effect, already divides the indivisibility of the sovereign “I” thus ensures the active-passive production and reproduction of norms determined by dominant relations of power. At the same time, however, such a notion of the already-there must be decoupled from a normalising anthropocentrism which unthinkingly identifies its machinery with human language, human culture, and human history alone.

This technics at and as the origin of sense, the “already” of the “there,” is, as we have seen, the reserving of the space of ethical response, of the calling forth of improper, transforming metonymies which, asymptotic with the fight for rights, breach

the enclosures of property and propriety. Ethics, it has further been argued, begins only in a movement beyond what can be determined. For the human animal, for example, ethics can begin only in a disidentification with the radical alterity of a *nonhuman* or *inhuman* being which marks, and thus interrupts, the measure and the limit of humanity.

More specifically, however, “the ethical” is that which, enacting bodyings as and at the limit of sense and of existence, necessarily withdraws in the opening of a politics as its actualised supplement. In this, the *politicity* of an animal encounter resides in the impossibility of preserving its call without redressing its insensibility within the clothes of the sensible, this latter being a reactive concealment which paradoxically marks its becoming naked. In contrast to Rancière then, a phrasing remains political only insofar as it no longer and not yet makes sense, thus making explicit the impropriety of its costume and hence the unnameable absence it names. In that the already-there nevertheless remains as its condition of possibility, however, there is as a result no guarantee that such a placeholder will gain, at the intersection of convention and consent, the necessary countersignatures of recognition.

The excess of the ethical, in other words, at once opens to *the risk of becoming-unrecognisable within the structures of meaning which reproduce viable ways of being*, and it is this risk, of a potentially fatal refusal or withdrawal of recognition, which will be explored throughout the first chapter of this part. This withholding, it will be argued, neutralises the ethical encounter through a redoubling of “outsides.”

As we have seen, the materiality of the atemporal outside imposes itself in the chance of an animal encounter, and in this opens *to* the unnameable outside of a given state of affairs which nevertheless resonates improperly *within* that state. In contrast to, and yet indissociable from, such an encounter, the withdrawal and withholding of making-sense-ability displaces and confines the maddening event to an “outside” constituted *within* a given state of affairs. In this way the internal “outside” serves as both the limit *of* normativity and the limit *to* normativity. It is, in other words, a conserving reaction which doubles and at once disavows the animal encounter by reinscribing it “inside” an “outside” constituted *by* a given state of affairs, and which constitutes the limit and the legitimate *of* that state.

Such reactive socioeconomic, political and material displacings range from social exclusion, ridicule, prejudice and hatred on the one hand, to the full-scale

mobilisation of the juridico-medical machinery with its physical confinements and judgments of criminality, deviancy, pathology and madness on the other. Being judged, whether officially or not, to be “mad,” as lacking the ability to make sense and thus “outside” of the social constraints determined by the already-there, is thus to be displaced *within* an “outside” constituted only in opposition to the “inside” of a given state of affairs. In this, the neutralising displacement of the encounter to the confines of the “outside” of reason can be seen to mirror the maddening displacement and extreme passivity of the encounter’s apocalyptic interval.

More than this, it is here, within this contested space of recognisability, the unrecognisable, and the withdrawal of recognition, that I aim to demonstrate in this part an essential link between the neutralisation of an animal encounter, the necessary dormancy of any so-called ethics based upon similarity and familiarity, and the genocidal economy of animalisation which serves to exclude other beings from the ability to make sense.

The discourse of madness is here linked, moreover, to *domesticity*, to the home and to the everyday, in that madness is in one sense the foreign, the unrecognisable, *within* the familiar. In Plato’s *The Sophist*, for example, the Foreigner fears that, in being outside of common (i.e., *communal*) sense, he will be judged mad. Doubling the immigrant’s fear that he or she will be unable to make sense in the language of another, the Foreigner in particular fears that he will be judged mad insofar as he represents a challenge to the paternal *logos* by suggesting that nonbeing, that whose being is not there, nevertheless *is* (or *has*) being. He fears, in other words, being judged as contrary to its truth of being-there.

This notion of “the effects of ‘foreignness’ in domesticity, the foreign in the same,” whether in the domestic space of the home, of the nation, or of language, necessarily relates, as Derrida suggests, to hospitality and to the question of its unconditionality (*Of Hospitality*, 158). Responding to the demand of an animal encounter, a response that is the challenge of a fidelity to its call, is indeed, I suggest here, to risk being judged mad. It is, in other words, to risk becoming a stranger or a foreigner at home, an internal exile or even a domestic terrorist. It is to risk becoming an asylum seeker and at once to risk the asylum.

However, as I aim to demonstrate in this part, *every living being is always already seeking asylum within the domestic, and yet each is constitutively foreign to the “there” of its singular being*. Consequently, every living being demands hospitality

and yet, insofar as hospitality demands an autonomous sovereign decision, every living being is incapable of offering it or, rather, is able to do so only inadequately. It is an inability and an insufficiency, moreover, which in addition renders both unjust and unjustifiable the liberal-Aristotelian contractual argument which seeks to exclude nonhuman animals from the ethical domain on the basis of an alleged inability to reciprocate.

### **Butler meets Burroughs**

In the first chapter of this part, I will explore in more detail the notion of redoubled “outsides,” further enabling us to understand why the inside-outside *topos*, with its suggestion of a simple line or lines of division, is both problematic and unavoidable. Beginning with Judith Butler’s work on what she calls the “killing ideals of gender and race” (*Bodies that Matter*, 124-5), I argue that a subject does indeed come to be as the result of reiterated practice propagating sameness and identification as and at the junctures of multiple “outsides.” The “subject” is, in other words, the singular nexus of a network of inculcation, constituted along “vectors of power” which “require and deploy each other for the purpose of their own articulation” (18). In this way, the property and propriety of the white European heterosexual human male depends for its hegemonic privilege upon the entanglement of internally constituted “outsides” within which animals, women, people of colour, and the poor come to be inscribed *as* excluded.

In contrast to Butler, however, I argue that “the human” is never the simple cumulatory *effect* of regulatory reproductive power, but rather is itself a regulatory norm. Indeed, I argue that all other norms—of race, gender, class, sexuality, and so on—must in fact pass through species difference in order to reproduce themselves as “natural.” The privileged sexuality accorded to the ideal of whiteness cannot, for example, be approached without an understanding of the machinery which devalorises people of colour by way of a negative displacement which shifts nonwhite sexuality towards “animality.” From this, we can then better understand the ethical *risk* which inheres within every animal encounter. The risk, in short, of an unbearable existence being neutralised, a risk which, by way of a conclusion, I will illustrate with two examples.

In chapter six I trace some of the implications of this through various related readings of the wild-tame and timeless-timebound dichotomies. My primary reference here will be the late texts of the North American novelist William S. Burroughs. They have been chosen not only because of their explicit engagement with human-animal relations but, more importantly, because they follow from an animal encounter which, claims Burroughs in a phrase reminiscent of Kafka's Investigator, saved him from "a deadly, pervasive ignorance" (*Cat Inside*, 46). In this way, I aim to demonstrate that, without an excessive hospitality, the entangled hegemonies of oppression are inevitably repeated and thus reinforced. I thus argue that, while for Burroughs the valorised timelessness of the wild makes possible an animal-Love which transcends pain and conflict, in fact the restriction of love to some, but not all, nonhuman animals inevitably serves only to reiterate a logic of domination, as evidenced too in the complementary reading of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of "becoming-animal."

Such a logic or *logos* is, in short, dependent upon the exclusion of the *alogon*. It depends, that is, upon the entangled exclusions of madness, of animals, and of the foreign within the domestic. Consequently, I argue in the final chapter of this part that the beginning of ethics resides within the detested figure of the Burroughsian centipede. Moreover, only in being-with the being-there of this monstrosity within the domestic does it become possible to move Burroughs' thinking of the posthuman beyond its masculinist, imperialist logic, a movement which will then lead us to a thinking (of) community in the following part.

## 5. Domestic Scenes and Species Trouble: The Nexus of Exclusion, Or, the “I” of the Storm

For women in patriarchal culture, additional concerns arise as well. For we have been swallowed *and* we are the swallows. We are the consumers *and* the consumed. We are the ones whose stomachs do not listen—having no ears—and we are the ones who seek to be heard from within the stomach that has no ears.

Carol J. Adams *The Sexual Politics of Meat*

### **Phantasms and ghosts: in the “I” of oppression**

The strategic value of encounters *with* animals for interrupting habitual interpretations that serve to conserve capitalism’s material and symbolic economies becomes even clearer when we consider that such encounters necessarily place one’s self socially at risk beyond the improper marking of its place. To understand this, however, it is necessary to understand the process by which the “phantasmatic ideals” of regulatory norms are naturalised. The “activity” of gendering, for example, both precedes the apparently willing subject and is, as Judith Butler explains, simultaneously “the matrix through which all willing first becomes possible” (*Bodies that Matter*, 7). Consider, Butler writes,

the medical interpellation which ... shifts an infant from an “it” to a “she” or a “he,” and in that naming, the girl is “girled,” brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender. But that “girling” of the girl does not end there; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reenforce or contest this naturalised effect. The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm (7-8).

Here, in contrast to Louis Althusser’s notion of “interpellation,” whereby the ideological subject is constituted by the law’s specular address, the subject for Butler is rather the singular yet ventriloquised nexus of a network of inculcations, constituted in the intersection of phantasmatic ideals reproduced by various, mutually articulating

regulatory norms. As a result, “the materiality of the body will not be thinkable apart from the materialisation of that regulatory norm” (2).

Equally important to us in this discussion of gendering “activity,” however, is the need to also consider, and not as something external or separate, that “other” matrix through which the majority of *nonhuman* animals are *refused* that shift to gendered being. Only once consideration is extended in this way does it become possible to understand the meshed machinery which opens the possibility of a refusal or withdrawal of gender, and which simultaneously determines that such a refusal or withdrawal from a human body necessarily “relegates” that excluded human being to the status of an animal. While Butler does indeed touch on this animalising displacement, insofar as nonhuman animals are, however, largely absent from her consideration, the economy underlying the negative displacement remains obscure.<sup>76</sup>

Nonetheless, central to Butler’s thinking is that for norms to be successfully reproduced they must *all* reinforce and re-enforce one another. The practice of gendering, to stay with Butler’s example, thus requires that it simultaneously redeploy racialising and heterosexualising practices. Mutually supporting, there exist no independently articulated norms but only imbricated “hegemonies of oppression” (132). As a result,

[a] convergent set of historical formations of racialised gender, of gendered race, of the sexualisation of racial ideals, or the racialisation of gender norms, makes up both the social regulation of sexuality and its psychic articulations. ... Hence, it is no longer possible to make sexual difference prior to racial difference or, for that matter, to make them into fully separable axes of social regulation and power (181-2).

In short, reiterated practice is reproductive power: “the power to produce—demarcate, circulate, differentiate—the bodies it controls” (1). It is this regulatory activity which both precedes and enables the materialisation of the willing subject, permitting Butler to claim that “the matrix of gender relations is *prior to* the emergence of the ‘human’” (7). This, however, is *not* the case, in that such a claim in fact effaces that reiterated practice Butler seeks to disclose.

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<sup>76</sup> Butler returns to consider nonhuman animals, albeit again only in passing, in *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (2009).

## Effecting the human

Being-there, it must be repeated, is to inhabit language(s) in the broadest sense of the already-there, that is, to inhabit a vast network of bounded and bonded structures of habitual sense, and is never the preserve of the human subject. Hence, instead of “the human” being the simple cumulatory *effect* of regulatory reproductive power, it is rather the case, as Butler indeed gestures towards in her discussion of Plato’s *khōra*, that “humanity” is itself a regulatory norm. “The human,” in other words, is a reiterated practice of human-ing which both requires and deploys every other norm for the purpose of its own articulation. Only in this way is the possible refusal or withdrawal of gender preserved, and only by way of mutual articulation might such a withdrawal simultaneously withdraw human status.

Indeed, a naturalised “species difference” is in Butler’s text the unmarked-but-marking receptacle through which all other norms must pass, and which, *in so doing*, constitutes this *apparent* effect of “the human.” This is not, however, to make species difference prior to, or more fundamental than, sexual, racial, or any other regulatory difference. To do so would be to fall prey to the very same error of exclusive priority which Butler discloses in Luce Irigaray’s “miming” of Plato (in this case, the exclusive prioritising of the feminine). It is rather the case, as we shall see, that while the *logon-alogon* distinction of species difference serves to “ground” all the others, it is at the same time “grounded” by each of those others. We must, therefore, explicitly extend Butler’s convergent sets of historical formations beyond the imbrication of gender, sexuality, and race so as to include such convergent sets as the animalisation of racialised gender, the gendering of animalised race, the humanisation of racial ideals, the racialisation of human norms, the normative sexualisation of animality, and so on.

It is indeed the case that various “attributions or interpellations contribute to that field of discourse and power that orchestrates, delimits, and sustains that which qualifies as ‘the human’” (8). It is also the case, however, that, unless we attend to the imbrication of a speciesist reproduction of species difference along and within the codetermining reproduction of sexism, racism, classism, and homophobia orchestrated by patriarchal Western practices of gendering, racialising and heterosexualising, we necessarily risk reproducing just those “hegemonies of oppression” which such discourse seeks to challenge. Indeed, just such an unwitting reiteration of oppression is



to be found, as we will see, not only in Butler, but also in the texts of William Burroughs and of Deleuze and Guattari.

Returning to the possible refusal or withdrawal of gender, Butler acutely contends that “the examples of those abjected beings who do not appear properly gendered” demonstrates “most clearly” that “it is their very humanness that comes into question” (8). For Butler, this serves only to demonstrate that “the human” is therefore the *effect* of reproductive power. It is, however, rather the case that, together with other regulatory norms with their own constitutive outsides, the inculcation of “humanising” norms, that is, of viable ways of being-human or, better, of ways of being acceptable to power, reproduces “the human” by way of the constitutive outside of “the animal.” Only this explains why the impropriety of gender puts humanness into question, as the question of humanness is always a question of the nonhuman, of the animal. Similarly, only by way of the constituted opposition between the human and the animal can we better understand, and thus question, the sexualisation mutually articulated by the “killing ideals” of race, for example, as with the privileged sexuality accorded to “whiteness.”

Returning to *Bodies That Matter*, Butler thus writes,

the construction of gender operates through *exclusionary* means, such that the human is not only produced over against the inhuman, but through a set of foreclosures, radical erasures, that are, strictly speaking, refused the possibility of cultural articulation. Hence, it is not enough to claim that human subjects are constructed, for the construction of the human is a differential operation that produces the more and the less “human,” the inhuman, the humanly unthinkable. These excluded sites come to bound the “human” as its constitutive outside, and to haunt those boundaries as the persistent possibility of their disruption and rearticulation (7-8).

This notion of boundary haunting, of those who, being-excluded, nevertheless illegally remain, crossing borders like ghosts so as to enter our space against our will, is central to this whole part. Nevertheless, insofar as Butler can think “the human” only in terms of a cumulative effect, what she thus leaves unmarked within the foreclosed domain of the inhuman, and in the differential reproduction of “the more and the less” human, is precisely the *nonhuman* animal, at once synonymous with irrationality, with dumb nature—with the *alogon*.

In her introduction to *Bodies That Matter*, however, Butler attempts to preempt just such criticism when she states that “any analysis which foregrounds one

vector of power over another will doubtless become vulnerable to criticisms that it not only ignores or devalues the others, but that its own constructions depend on the exclusion of the others in order to proceed” (18). A future criticism she then counters with the point that “any analysis which pretends to be able to encompass every vector of power runs the risk of a certain epistemological imperialism which consists in the presupposition that any given writer might fully stand for and explain the complexities of contemporary power. ... [T]hose who claim to offer such pictures become suspect by virtue of that very claim” (18-19).

Here, however, I do not make any such claims to certainty and/or completeness, but only aim to demonstrate that, if we wish to even begin to approach the complexities of contemporary power, one cannot *not* include the question of species difference. This is because it is “the animal” as constitutive outside which both enables and haunts the production of the properly human, a differential operation indissociable from the gendering, racialising, sexualising—and all too often marginalising—activity of the “more and the less.”

The animal-*alagon* is, in other words, essential to the hierarchical functioning of this “more and less.” This is because “the animal” is always the least of the less, the negative pole to be overcome, more and less, along a humanist teleology which reaches its apotheosis in the phantasmatic ideal of the white human male. Hence, the complex differential articulation of regulatory ideals necessarily constitutes women, people of colour, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transexuals, the poor, and so forth, as “more” and “less” human, that is to say, as “less” and “more” *animal*.

Hence, just as the reproduction of heterosexuality will take various forms “depending on how race and the reproduction of race are understood” (167-8), so too will this reproduction depend upon how “humanness” and the reproduction of “the human” are understood, inseparable from the animalised or abjected categories of race and of sexuality. In another direction, the naturalisation of heterosexuality depends upon the normative sexualisation of animality, one which paradoxically utilises an unremarked biological continuism. Or again, the alleged misandry of the lesbian—in which “a lesbian is one who must have had a bad experience with men, or who has not yet found the right one” (127)—crosses with the alleged misanthropy attributed to anyone concerned with the exploitation, torture and extermination of nonhuman animals (animal activists, it is invariably alleged, must hate humans as a result of social deficiency). Following Butler, such diagnoses presume, on the one hand, that

lesbianism “is acquired by virtue of some failure in the heterosexual machinery, thereby continuing to install heterosexuality as the “cause” of lesbian desire” (127) and, on the other, that animal concern is acquired by virtue of some failure in the machinery of anthropocentrism, thereby continuing to install human exceptionalism as the “cause” of animal concern. One thinks here, for example, of love for a companion animal being reconstrued as deflected biological, and feminised, desire for a human child.

In this way, both humanist and heterosexual desire are always constructed as “true,” whereas animal concern and lesbianism are “always and only a mask and forever false” (127). Within this economy too is found the reactive subordination in which concern for nonhuman suffering is deemed offensive to man, as degrading to both his exceptionality and to his interiority, and which is thus dismissed as an immoral deflection of “more pressing” human concerns.

That species difference is left unmarked in Butler’s text thus has serious consequences, as acknowledged by Butler herself, albeit only in the context of *sexual* difference. It is, she writes, the claim of a fundamental priority for sexual difference over racial difference which,

has marked so much psychoanalytic feminism as white, for the assumption here is not only that sexual difference is more fundamental, but that there is a relationship called “sexual difference” that is itself unmarked by race. That whiteness is not understood by such a perspective as a racial category is clear; it is yet another power that need not speak its name. Hence, to claim that sexual difference is more fundamental than racial difference is effectively to assume that sexual difference is white sexual difference, and that whiteness is not a form of racial difference (181-2).

In the same way therefore, to claim an equal and fundamental primacy of racial and sexual differences presupposes that the relationships named in this way are themselves unmarked by species. This effectively assumes that sexual and racial differences are human sexual and racial differences, and that humanness is not a form of species difference. It is to assume, in other words, that the constitution of the “more or less” human (and simultaneously of the “more or less” animal) is itself unmarked by racial and sexual differences. In short then, the humanist ideals of the West are assumed to be prior to, and thus untouched by, racial, sexual, and species differences, an assumption which, as we will see in the next part, thus reiterates the xenophobic Platonic economy of masculinist reason.

## The foreign in place and the madness of power

Butler most clearly discloses the stakes of this exclusive operation in her critique of Luce Irigaray's reading of the place or nonplace of *khōra* (or *chora*) in Plato's *Timaeus*. Nor is it by chance that this is the only place in *Bodies That Matter* where, to my knowledge, Butler attends, if only briefly, to nonhuman others. Whereas Irigaray identifies the "elsewhere" of "the" *chora* with the founding exclusion of the feminine, Butler points out that Irigaray therefore excludes all those "other" others similarly excluded from the economy of masculinist reason:

Plato's scenography of intelligibility depends on the exclusion of women, slaves, children, and animals, where slaves are characterised as those who do not speak his language, and who, in not speaking his language, are considered diminished in their capacity for reason. ... This domain of the less than rational human bounds the figure of human reason, producing that "man" as one who is without a childhood; is not a primate and so is relieved of the necessity of eating, defecating, living and dying; one who is not a slave, but always a property holder; one whose language remains originary and untranslatable (48).

For Plato, as Butler makes clear, it is the speechless (*alogon*), and thus the irrational (*alogon*), who must be excluded in crafting the "imaginary morphology" of masculinist reason. In this, the dumb animal (*alogon*) is thus the utterly other, the absolute outsider. Indeterminate and undecidable, the outside of the outside and thus both continuous and radically separate, the "eating, defecating, living and dying" animal thus becomes the perpetual site of a contestation, the test of a dangerous and dreaded proximity the overcoming of which the limit of the human is judged. We will discover this testing animal again in the next chapter, a test, moreover, which shatters the purity of love.

For the moment, however, we can better understand how the reproduction of a domain of intelligible "human" bodies depends upon exclusion. A reproduction which must simultaneously reproduce "a domain of unthinkable, abject, unlivable bodies" (xi), of which the living and dying animal is the absolutely unthinkable, the absolutely abject, the absolutely unlivable. The spectre, in other words, of an indecipherable and unmasterable materiality, of a dreaded unintelligibility. Terrifying, monstrous, "the

animal” never stands before us in the relation of a simple reversal of intelligibility, but rather marks an “illegible domain that haunts the former domain as the spectre of its own impossibility, the very limit to intelligibility” (xi).

In this way, the undecidable limit that is “the animal” falls back upon those “other” human animals, an economy indissociable from the constitution of the (non)subject. Thus, while Butler points out that the “materialisation of reason ... operates through the dematerialisation of other bodies, for the feminine, strictly speaking, has no morphe, no morphology, no contour, for it is that which contributes to the contouring of things, but is itself undifferentiated, without boundary” (49), the figure of the abject nonsubject without which this dematerialisation could not be reproduced remains always that of “the animal” as undifferentiated, undying Nature. It is this, moreover, which always again reserves the potential to render “other” humans as “animal,” and thus killable, in displacing them “backwards” along the familiar humanist teleological dialectic.

Bringing us back into the vicinity, the proximity, of madness, it is thus the animal which, even more than the idiot, “points to a deprived relation to language, a constitutive disorder in memory” (Ronell *Stupidity*, 253). Without the “as,” without memory, there is no idiot without “the animal,” without this apparently idiotic animal who “unleash[es] only muffled signals of original erasure. Idiocy commences in disfigurement, as the mutilation over which the philosophers tried to write in an attempt to restore the proper, the literal, what is proper to man” (253).

Outside, yet undecidably so, of the exclusive property of the human, this constitutive “idiocy” of the animal, the “irrationality of the beast,” relates directly to the domain of the domestic. The “xenophobic” Platonic exclusion, writes Butler, operates through the reproduction of “those considered less rational by virtue of their appointed task in the process of laboring to reproduce the conditions of private life” (*Bodies that Matter*, 49). Here, Butler thus draws attention to the animalisation of both reproductive and domestic labour. In the former category, we find the exclusion from masculinist reason of women within the domain of the domestic, within the reproduction of the Same, figured by the animality of reproduction. Here it should be recalled that, for Plato, the feminine *khōra* is the receptacle through which the Father reproduces only versions of itself, unmarked by their passage in a “transfer of the reproductive function from the feminine to the masculine” (42). In the latter, masculinist reason excludes all those other beings who, outside and yet within the

domestic arena, are thus construed as foreign to reason, i.e., slaves and immigrant workers, children and certain other (so-called “food” and “working”) animals. Labouring only to reproduce, yet without leaving their mark, the twinned categories of the domestic and the domesticated are thus constituted by way of nonhuman animals as that which, being excluded, improperly and unintelligibly resides within the domain of the properly human precisely as the condition of its reproduction.

As we have seen, the domain of the animal is constituted as the absolutely unlivable domain, that of the “merely” living (and dying) nonsubject, and which “constitute[s] that site of dreaded identification against which—and by virtue of which—the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life” (3).<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, “the animal” must thus always remain within the properly human as the trace of “its” denial, as the foreign within human property, excluded within the uniform and calculable reproduction of the Same. Already within the domestic scene through which the human is reproduced, “man” has no choice but to share his home, his place, with “the animal,” and indeed, as we shall see in the next chapters, with nonhuman animals. “The animal” is, in short, the absolutely foreign in the domestic, the most distant in the closest proximity, recalling us otherwise to that “proximal distance” found in both Blanchot and Heidegger. Exceeding all recognition and yet sharing our space and taking our time, animals are thus the always with us that are (constitutively) not “us.”

For this reason, it is with animals that the question of ethics must begin. Indeed, it is here in this unlivable domain, this domain of the absolutely abject, of absolute rejection, where in the next chapter we shall later unearth the centipede, this most ancient of ancient animals to whom, and perhaps first of all, we owe unconditional hospitality. Such affirmative hospitality is not, however, to suggest we are talking about inviting centipedes into one’s home (which is not to say that it might *not* be about that). Rather, it is question of sharing our space and our time as far as possible without contempt, or hate, or fear. It is indeed to *rejoice* in insects, as we have heard the Gnat suggest to Alice. An affirmation freed from an exclusive hierarchy by which the value of other beings is unthinkingly rejected and abjected, rendered

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<sup>77</sup> One can thus understand why the dread of “animal identification,” which has compelled feminists at least since Simone de Beauvoir, in one sense reiterates the very patriarchal logic such thinkers seek to interrupt. On this, see Carol J. Adams & Josephine Donovan (eds) *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995).

instrumental and instrumentally rendered in the production and reproduction of profit and power. It is a question, in short, of an opening to the ethical and thus the political which disrupts the domination of the economic.

In summary then, I have argued that the norms or “phantasmatic ideals” of sexual and racial recognition must at once pass through the regulatory norms of “humanness,” norms which differ according to the singular being-there as the nexus, as the eye and the “I,” of what Butler calls the “hegemonies of oppression.” As a result, putting “humanness” into question—a question which is nothing less than the question of *recognition*—at once constitutes a challenge to these hegemonies of oppression. Hence, and returning to the epigraph with which this part began, an ethics which presupposes “the human” as at once its condition, effect, and unmarked category is an error which thus ensures that ethics can never begin.

### **Becoming-unrecognisable**

Before we can turn to the beginning of ethics, which we shall do in the next chapter, we must first of all consider more fully this question of recognition. More specifically, it is necessary to demonstrate why it is that an animal encounter, in opening itself to the unnameable outside which interrupts the conservative machinery of recognition, is at once to risk becoming *unrecognisable*. Why, in other words, it risks the withdrawal of viable subject status and, indeed, of one’s very “humanity.” A withdrawal, moreover, which marks the encounter’s effective neutralisation.

Given that regulatory practices are aimed both *at* everyone and *to* no one (there being no preexisting subject), they are thus general, structural, and therefore recurrent, requiring endless reiteration in order to be, in order to *naturalise* their power and efficacy. A norm, as Butler writes, is “a constant and repeated effort to imitate its own idealisations” (*Bodies that Matter*, 125). Yet that which guarantees the ongoing efficacy, that is, the recontextualisation that defines *practice*, is also that which already undermines it, insofar as the excess of iterability ensures that the context of an utterance is never fully determined. It is this, as we know, which preserves the possibility of it functioning as a catachrestic reinscription within contexts where it has not previously belonged. It is, in other words, a reproduction already beset by the anxiety of a violent, unforeseeable transformation, of the crossing between I and Other.

As we also know, however, norms do not exist in isolation, but are rather mutually articulating. Multiply and thus singularly positioned, the subject is constituted, as Thomas Keenan writes, to the extent that such addressees and respondents “interfere with one another, interfere incommensurably and radically, and do not add up to one thing. There are effects of ideology and of responsibility, of legal and ethico-political agency, only thanks to these asymmetrical addresses and untotizable responses” (*Fables of Responsibility*, 25). On the one hand then, being always already *subject* to recognition, the singularity of an encounter—the putting to work of a machinery of materiality—always remains to violate the proper limit of identification. On the other, however, it constitutes a violation which, in threatening to disclose, to *denaturalise*, the founding-conserving network of norms, places one’s self at risk in that the already existing state of affairs is compelled to seek its neutralisation.

In short then, the “I is other” comes to be outside of a given state of affairs in placing one’s self at *risk*. As Judith Butler says in her recent reading of Michel Foucault,

To call into question a regime of truth, where that regime of truth governs subjectivation, is to call into question the truth of myself and, indeed, to question my ability to tell to truth about myself, to give an account of myself. ... It also turns out that self-questioning of this sort involves putting oneself at risk, imperiling the very possibility of being recognised by others, since to question the norms of recognition that govern what I might be, to ask what they leave out, what they might be compelled to accommodate, is, in relation to the present regime, to risk unrecognisability as a subject or at least to become an occasion for posing the questions of who one is (or can be) and whether or not one is recognisable (*Giving an Account*, 22-3)

It is this risk, not only of social censure and/or physical confinement but also the risk of coming to being unable to be, of finding one’s self incapable of continuing to exist, which remarks the opening of the ethical space. Recalling our previous chapters, this post-evental “I” is “other,” utterly alien to the “I” prior to the untimely encounter, the apocalyptic nonplace across which the world of the “already there” changes irretrievably.

Consequently, the trace of the ethical encounter necessarily calls forth the risk of the political supplement, in that its “I” is other to the dominant culture of recognised value. A bodying, in coming to be other outside of a given order and yet nonetheless



having to exist, thus constitutes a being that is incapable of not being (other) and at once incapable of continuing to be: “I” *must* affirm this, in that “I” cannot not bear this and thus “I” bear it freely, taking responsibility for it and being responsible to it, this decision “I” have not taken. The “subjectivation” of an animal encounter is thus a fidelity to the to-come, but also, in marking the *beginning* of ethics, to a vigilant passivity which opens ever again to an animal encounter, to its force of undecidability in contrast to the dogma of faith. An ever-again demanded by the fact that fidelity is always an inadequate language, already congealing, solidifying, setting and ordering, and thus never *sufficiently* responsible to the demand.

The potentially fatal risk of being unable to continue to exist remains, however, insofar as that which cannot *not* be borne risks becoming unbearable, the risk—suicidal or murderous—of an enforced cessation. It is in the hope of clarifying this complex movement of opening and closure that, in the final sections of this chapter, I offer two examples of this risk, one “fictional” and one “documented.”

### **Having to exist, unbearably**

The experience of Elizabeth Costello, respected Australian writer and the eponymous central character of J. M. Coetzee’s 1999 “novel in eight lessons,” is our first example—an example which, like every example, is explicitly didactic.<sup>78</sup> Transformed by an unspoken encounter after which, incapable of recognising “meat” rather than corpses (or, better, incapable of *not* recognising “meat”) and thus incapable of recognising the humaneness, the humanness, of the human, Costello finds herself brought to the point of collapse by the impossibility of continuing to be. An impossibility which is at once the affirmation of the encounter:

“Is it possible, I ask myself, that all of them are participants in a crime of stupefying proportions? Am I fantasising it all? I must be mad! Yet every day I see the evidences. The very people I suspect produce the evidence,

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<sup>78</sup> On *Elizabeth Costello*, see Cora Diamond “The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy” in Cavell, Stanley *et al Philosophy and Animal Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 43-90, as well as Cary Wolfe’s “Flesh and Finitude.” See also the contributions of Amy Gutman, Marjorie Garber, Peter Singer, Wendy Doniger, and Barbara Smuts in J. M. Coetzee *Lives of Animals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), in which two chapters of *Elizabeth Costello* originally appeared.

exhibit it, offer it to me. Corpses. Fragments of corpses that they have bought for money.

“It is as if I were to visit friends, and to make some polite remark about the lamp in their living room, and they were to say, “Yes, it’s nice, isn’t it? Polish-Jewish skin it’s made of, we find that’s best, the skins of young Polish-Jewish virgins.” And then I go to the bathroom and the soap wrapper says, “Treblinka—100% human stearate.” Am I dreaming, I say to myself? What kind of house is this?

“Yet I’m not dreaming. I look into your eyes, into Norma’s, into the children’s, and I see only kindness, human kindness. Calm down, I tell myself, you are making a mountain out of a molehill. This is life. Everyone else comes to terms with it, why can’t you? *Why can’t you?*” (114-5)

Displaced outside of the everyday, Costello thus finds her self thrown into a “there” she is potentially unable to endure, no longer able to come to terms with the “life” of a given state of affairs. As such, she becomes aware of *having to exist* as an “other,” or else cease to exist. Indeed, either way “I” has already ceased to be. This is not, however, a *choice*, not a *decision*. It is an injunction, as Derrida writes, “that I do not see coming, that never leaves me in peace and never lets me put it off until later. ... It is what is most undeniably *real*. And sensible. Like the other” (*Rogues*, 84).<sup>79</sup> It is, in other words, both the most undeniable and the most material: *an interruption by the Real which is the giving of that singularity which can no longer be missed and not yet mis-taken*.

Here too, we find the place of the encounter being held only by an improper phrasing: “animal Holocaust.” As we will see in chapter eight, this phrasing, which tends to provoke such outrage, resonates in unexpected directions, coalescing in and as the sharing of its disorientating call. It manifests itself, that is to say, in opposition to the dominant reaction of recognised value which seeks to neutralise it, which refuses to recognise its sense and thus betrays the map of its site of exclusion.

It is thus not by chance that Costello finds herself abruptly marginalised, externalised, (further) excluded from masculinist reason and thus from the domain of the properly human. A movement which produces within her a fear that she must be delusional, that she must, in fact, be “mad.” This can be seen most clearly in the reaction to a lecture given by Costello at a respected North American university, a reaction in which “vectors of power” require and deploy each other in order to exclude

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<sup>79</sup> One could perhaps argue that Nietzsche’s final animal encounter, throwing his arms around a horse being abused in the street followed by complete mental collapse, constitutes an empirical, biographical example of this undeniable injunction: exist otherwise or cease to exist.

“Elizabeth Costello” from the domain of intelligibility. Even before the lecture, however, Costello’s “opinions” concerning animals are denounced, in what is an interesting slur given the context, as a “hobbyhorse” by her son (an assistant professor in the natural sciences) (60), and dismissed by her daughter-in-law Norma (a philosopher-of-mind and reviewer of primate language-learning experiments) as “jejune and sentimental” (61). After snorting and sighing throughout Costello’s “rambling” lecture, Norma insists that Costello should not “be allowed to get away with it! She’s confused!” to which her husband replies wearily, “She’s old, she’s my mother” (81). Ultimately, Costello is accused of lacking the clarity of reason, a lack which makes her at worst senile and, at best, “a kook” (81).

Costello in fact oversteps the proscribed limits precisely by performing in *public* what are construed as the *private* concerns of a sentimental, confused old woman astride her hobbyhorse. A public performance, moreover, which takes place in a university, sanctuary for the clarity of (masculinist) reason. In placing herself outside of the domain of the domestic in this way, Costello thus commits the feminine sin of leaving her mark upon the reproductive function: “If she wants to open her heart to animals,” her son wants to know, “why can’t she stay home and open it to her cats?” (83).<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the accusation of sentimentality, that is, of irrational feminine emotion in contrast to clear masculine reasoning, has long been a tried-and-tested tactic in opposition to nonhuman animal concern.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, as we will see in the next chapter, Coetzee here strikes an eerie echo of Deleuze and Guattari’s contemptuous equation of the domestic with that of a foolishly sentimental old woman who “cherishes” her “petty” little cats.

By asserting publicly, within reason, that “womanly sentimentality” which it is deemed should be confined to the privacy of the home, that is, to the domestic setting in which nonhuman animals figure only a feminine reproductive lack, as supplementing the absence of labour, Costello is thus deemed suspect by the regulatory machinery, her “reason” and by consequence her “humanness” put into question. Costello has, in short, become foreign to the domestic relation insofar as she calls forth animals within the properly human domain of reason (in her lecture, she

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<sup>80</sup> See also Hélène Cixous “The Cat’s Arrival,” in which a (feminine) love for a cat is judged “mad” by “the voices of the house.” The main “house voice”—the “Voice of Reason”—is that of economy, against which “the gentle madwoman did not [or could not] argue.” (21-42 (34)).

<sup>81</sup> Following the entangled hegemonies of oppression being traced here, it is no surprise therefore that the majority of animal activists are women.

compares herself to Red Peter, the ape who makes “A Report to an Academy” in Kafka’s tale). “Not her *métier*, argumentation,” according to her scientist son, unchanged by this passage through his mother: “She should not be here” (80).

Irrespective of her recognised professional position then, insofar as Costello puts into question the limits and the proper place of the human subject she at once puts at risk her own “properly” human place. The risk, in other words, of finding oneself marginalised in being displaced “backwards” along the humanist teleological dialectic. Reconfigured as sentimental and irrational, as an old and possibly senile woman who should have remained in her proper place at home, her right to the status of responsible subject is thus placed in doubt. She is displaced, in other words, *within* an internally-constituted “outside” which serves to neutralise the very fidelity she affirms. We shall see, moreover, when we come to the murder of Venus Xtravaganza in a moment, just how extreme this risk of neutralisation can be.

To summarise, in contrast to the affirmative space of invention no longer and not yet making sense and held open by the meaningless placeholder, we instead discover here a different withdrawal or withholding of recognition—the negative order which de-faces that which exceeds it. In this, the dominant order in fact repeats the schematic tyranny of misrecognition, not in this case to *constitute* the subject, but rather to *withdraw* that status in a *conserving* of its stasis and its State, of its law founded in violence.

At the limit, improper bodyings thus risk being condemned in being reinscribed, reproduced as the outside of making sense-ability through an exclusion of an inside: *as* nonsense, *as* madness. As such, they are reduced to the silence of the *alogon* by the reciprocal rearticulation of the hegemonies of oppression, that is, *by way of the very machinery of animalisation it disrupts*.

Here then, is disclosed an essential link between the neutralisation of an animal encounter and the genocidal economy of animalisation, that of the refusal of the ethical opening by way of constitutive outsides which seek to reinstitute the property of the Same. It is not incidental that with Costello one can see in miniature what is happening to animal activists at the macrolevel. Following the opportunistic post-9/11 power grab of the USA PATRIOT ACT of 2001 and then the Animal Enterprises Terrorism Act (AETA) of 2006, for example, animal activism in the United States has been ranked (and thus *produced*) as the number one domestic terrorist threat. In this animal activists too, branded as irrational, frenzied anti-progress and anti-

Enlightenment crazies and positioned on a par with those other all too familiar “figures of evil,” fall prey to the exclusionary economy of animalisation. All such “evils,” however, are specifically *domestic* threats, that is, are threateningly foreign to the domestic, dangerously out-of-place in place—which brings us to our second example: Venus Xtravaganza.

### Crossing out the animals

Directed and produced by Jennie Livingston, *Paris is Burning* (1991) documents the Harlem drag balls between 1987 and 1989. In these balls, African-American and Latino men compete in a variety of categories, such as “executive,” “schoolboy/girl,” and “town and country,” in which they are judged according to a standard of “realness.” Described by one of the balls’ participants as the attempt to become “a real woman, or a real man—a straight man” by “erasing all the flaws, the mistakes,” “realness” is thus an effect, as Butler writes, determined by “the ability to compel belief, to produce the naturalised effect” through the reiteration of norms (*Bodies that Matter*, 129). In successfully but “improperly” *reproducing* this “naturalised” effect, however, this ability to “pass” as “real” must thus at the same time *denaturalise* those very same norms. And it is here, at and as this intersection, that the figure of Venus Xtravaganza emerges as a compelling focal point of what is a problematic but nevertheless fascinating film.<sup>82</sup>

A light-skinned Latina who “passes” as both white and female, Venus seeks above all a comfortable white domesticity with white goods and a white wedding dress. Rich white girls, she says, get everything they want, and for Venus the only way of accessing this idealised domestic scene is by transforming herself into a “complete” woman: “I want a car, I want to be with the man I love, I want a nice home, away from New York where no one knows me [i.e., in middle-class white suburbia]. I want my sex-change. I want to get married in church in white.” It is not enough, that is to say, for Venus to “pass” as white and female only at the Harlem balls, but rather, if this domestic ideal is to be fulfilled, she must be able to “pass” all the time and in the most

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<sup>82</sup> On the problems of Livingstone’s “phallic” position of promise, see bell hooks “Is Paris Burning?” *Z, Sisters of the Yam* (June 1991). This is further discussed by Butler in *Bodies That Matter*, 133-7.

intimate of situations. This passionate yet mundane desire, which is the desire not to be excluded as foreign or unnatural, not to be placed out-of-place—the desire to be, and to desire the desires of, a wealthy white heterosexual woman rather than a Latino homosexual transvestite—contrasts shockingly with the revelation of her murder at the end of the film.

Presumably killed by a male client upon discovery of her male sexual organs, Venus is murdered, in other words, for her supplemental “incompleteness,” for the foreignness having always already invaded (the dream of) the domestic. The manifestation of which puts at risk her viability as a human being at the hands, both literal and symbolic, of a patriarchal order: Venus is discovered strangled and stuffed *under* a bed, the place of an animal, in a cheap hotel room.

Her murder thus all too clearly bears on the gap between the phantasmatic constitution of “realness”—“crossing” the limits of both race and gender—performed during the balls, and the “morphological ideal” reproduced by the inculcation of oppressive hegemonic norms, a gap which is in fact the constitutive exclusion of the former by the latter. Hence, as Butler writes, this is a “killing that is performed by a symbolic that would eradicate those phenomena that require an opening up of the possibilities for the resignification of sex” (131). Nevertheless, it is not *only* a question of sexuality:

If Venus wants to become a woman, and cannot overcome being a Latina, then Venus is treated by the symbolic in precisely the ways in which women of colour are treated. Her death thus testifies to a tragic misreading of the social map of power, a misreading orchestrated by that very map according to which the sites for a phantasmatic self-overcoming are constantly resolved into disappointment. If the signifiers of whiteness and femaleness—as well as some forms of hegemonic maleness constructed through class privilege—are sites of phantasmatic promise, then it is clear that women of colour and lesbians are not only everywhere excluded from this scene, but constitute a site of identification that is consistently refused and abjected in the collective phantasmatic pursuit of a transubstantiation into various forms of drag, transsexualism, and uncritical miming of the hegemonic (131).

It is not enough, Butler thus makes clear, merely to *mime* the hegemonic, albeit illegitimately—an assertion which recalls our earlier discussion of political eventuation in the context of the mimicking by the Roman plebeians of the existing discourse of power. It remains unclear, however, in what way the positing of what Butler calls

“resignification” can be differentiated from just such an uncritical miming other than by taking account, retrospectively, of its effects. And yet, as we have seen, the moment in which the “significance” of a phrasing’s inaugural citation—its improper metonymic reiteration—becomes accountable, becoming naked in being clothed in the transparently sensible, is rather the mark of its parodic recuperation. Accountability, in other words, marks the neutralisation of the phrasing by the dominant order, the marker that it has ceased to manifest itself, has ceased to *matter*. By contrast, the revolutionary mark of an encounter is *not* its resignification, but rather the anxious obduracy of its being *between* sense.

Moreover, what Butler leaves unmarked here is the question of what constitutes viable ways of being *human*. Yet again, given the mutual articulation of regulatory norms, the denaturalisation of both race and gender enacted by Venus at once denaturalises, as it must, the constructed domain of the properly human. Paradoxically, Venus falls prey to the murderous reactive judgment, both homophobic and misogynistic, of “unnaturalness” (of being a “freak” of nature), which thus falls back upon an unremarked biological continuism. As we have seen, the naturalisation of human heterosexuality depends upon the normative heterosexualisation of animality (long used by men to excuse anything from rape to hunting). Hence the exclusion of homosexuality from “humanness” by way of an alleged “unnaturalness” depends therefore upon an allegedly “natural” human animality or, rather, depends upon the reproduction of sexual activity as essentially *animal*, and thus, in a sense, not “human” at all.

The reproduction of Venus as “unnatural,” in other words, paradoxically depends upon her exceptional humanness so as to withdraw from her that very status of “humanness.” At the same time, however, the conservative judgment which ends with her murder or, more accurately perhaps in this context, her *slaughter*, depends equally upon a human-animal distinction which *denies* to humans a “natural” animal sexual and reproductive activity, that is to say, the potential retained by certain nonhuman animals to change their “biological” sexuality so as to gain social advantage. In this, Venus Xtravanganza thus finds herself, between the “naturalness” and the exceptionalism of the “human,” doubly displaced.

Venus is thus murdered both for her unnaturalness *and* her animality, an “unnatural animality” which fatally crosses with white, masculinist notions of her being a prostitute and both (and neither) a Latina and a woman. In potentially putting

into question what it means to be properly human and, consequently, properly *animal*, Venus—described by her House mother as being too *wild*, as always taking too many risks—thus at once risks performing an abject and “unnatural animality.” One which, displacing her inside the “outside” of the human domain, withdraws from her all “human rights.” As Butler writes,

The painfulness of her death at the end of the film suggests as well that there are cruel and fatal social constraints on denaturalisation. As much as she crosses gender, sexuality, and race performatively, the hegemony that reinscribes the privileges of normative femininity and whiteness wields the final power to *renaturalise* Venus’s body and cross out that prior crossing, an erasure that is her death (133).

Such a displacing renaturalisation, however, one which moves Venus from unequal sexual partner to dead animal stuffed under a bed, cannot be performed by the constituted abjection of race and sexuality alone. Rather, its “crossing-out of the crossing” must simultaneously cross, must pass through and cross out, the nonhuman animal.

One can now better understand the degree of risk inhering in and as the animal encounter’s denaturalisation of the phantasmatic constitution of “humanness.” Nevertheless, it is only here, in this nonplace where “I” is no longer and not yet, that ethics, and thus politics, begins. It is always, in other words, a question of the foreign in the same, of that which is with us but is not “us,” and of our reaction or response. This question, as we shall see in the next chapter, always passes by way of nonhuman animals, and of the “domesticity” of “the animal.” Unless we remain vigilant to our originary relatedness, however, these crossed-out, and thus paradoxically unmarked animals simply pass by without appearing to leave a trace.



## 6. The Wild and the Tame: The Death of a Queer Centipede

They say only love can create, so who the fuck could love up a centipede?  
William S. Burroughs *Last Words*

### Introduction: stepping back

In the previous chapter I argued that ethics centres on the question of hospitality. It concerns, that is to say, the space and the time of the foreigner who arrives, who takes place “within” our most intimate property and, indeed, who takes our place, and to whom we must respond no matter the risk to our self. Here, I aim to further demonstrate that such hospitality must always remain excessively and vigilantly nonhuman, if we are not to take an unthinking step backwards, as I would suggest Judith Butler does in the conclusion to the recent *Giving an Account of Oneself*.

Here, Butler in fact offers a succinct description of this ethical imperative. Ethics, she writes,

requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness ... To be undone by another is a primary necessity, an anguish, to be sure, but also a chance—to be addressed, claimed, bound to what is not me, but also to be moved, to be prompted to act, to address myself elsewhere, and so to vacate the self-sufficient “I” as a kind of possession (136).

As it stands here, I agree fully with Butler’s definition. The difficulty arises however, hidden for the moment behind that ellipsis, wherein Butler reinscribes the ethical moment, this risk of being *dispossessed* “when what forms us diverges from what lies before us,” as the properly *human* property or possession in claiming that it constitutes nothing less than “*our* chance of becoming human” (136).

In this, Butler opens herself to the very same critique which she levels at Luce Irigaray more than a decade previously in *Bodies That Matter*. Irigaray, she writes there, “fails to follow through the metonymic link between women and these other

Others [slaves, children and animals], idealising and appropriating the ‘elsewhere’ as the feminine. But what is the ‘elsewhere’ of Irigaray’s ‘elsewhere’? ... what and who is excluded in the course of Irigaray’s analysis?” (49). In idealising and appropriating the “elsewhere” that are “moments of unknowingness” as the solely human, Butler has already given us the answer to the question of what and who is excluded in the course of her own later analysis. In what sense, it could be asked, is this properly human ethics an ethics of the unrecognisable other, an address to that which “I” encounter which is not me and which forms an “I” that is other than that which can be recognised by the dominant structures of meaning?

If ethics is the becoming of the human, then the human is an (indeed, any) animal with the addition of ethics, whereas the “animal other” “is” pure or simple being without supplement—ontologically deprived of ethics and thus essentially outside of the ethical domain. Here then, Butler is reiterating Levinas’ claim that only the human can be ethical because only the human breaks with the “pure being” of simple self-preservation. We discover, in other words, that in “having” access to the ethical, “the human” once again comes to be only in dialectically overcoming and thus ceasing to be an animal, a variant of the all too human ascension from “base nature” to “higher culture.”

In this, Butler thus impels us to recognise ethics as risking “our” selves in and as moments of unknowingness which put into question the norms of recognition, whilst at once reproducing the most proper of recognisable norms: that of ethics, and thus responsibility, as the limit and the proper of the human. Here, Butler recognises the imperative of an ethical unknowing, of the call and the demand of unrecognisability, and yet nevertheless reinscribes the structurally unrecognisable as another that is properly—similarly, familiarly—narcissistic.

In order to put *out* of the question this and other similarly reactive moves, these unthinking backward steps, I introduce in this chapter the centipede against whom, according to the novelist William S. Burroughs, love—and thus the mirror—must shatter. By opening the chapter in this way, I aim to further clarify why, without the opening of an excessive, hyperbolic *animal* ethics, the entangled hegemonies of oppression are unavoidably reinforced.

To do this, however, we must engage further with the notion of the domestic and, more specifically, with its function within various contemporary reiterations of the wild-tame and timeless-timebound dichotomies. Here, we will discover the “walking

ghost,” the dead zombie flesh, of the instrumentalised animal, which I argue constitutes the inverse of the “revolutionary spirit” of the living corpse that returns. Whereas the latter *stalls* the machinery of animalisation, the former, I will argue, reproduces a symbolic logic of oppression which serves to constitute subjugated beings “deserving” of their oppression. This will in turn allow us to distinguish a third machine of tropological displacement, one which works in concert with the two we already know: that which reconfigures “other” humans *as* “animal,” and that which withdraws a recognisable human status. Moreover, I will argue, this third machine, in orchestrating a displacement from living embodiment to inferior copy, serves to retroactively naturalise the other two.

### **The poor rejected Pede**

Having published the semi-autobiographical *Junkie* in pulp imprint Ace Books in 1953, William S. Burroughs’ first major novel, *Naked Lunch*, appeared in full for the first time in 1959 following the successful resolution of an obscenity trial. He followed this in the 1960s with several texts based on the “cut-up” method, in which a variety of heterogeneous texts are randomly sliced up and juxtaposed, which he developed with his friend and mentor Brion Gysin, before going on to publish a number of important novels including *The Wild Boys* and the Red Night Trilogy throughout the 1970s and 80s, continuing to write and publish until his death in 1997. In this chapter, I have chosen to focus on three of Burroughs’ later texts: the novel *Ghost of Chance* (1991), the collection *The Cat Inside* (1986, 1992), and his final journals, which were published as *Last Words* in 2000. These texts not only explicitly explore the ethics of human-animal relations, but also, and more importantly for us here, they follow on chronologically from an encounter with cats which, according to Burroughs, saved him from a fatal ignorance, offering pure love in its place.

It is clear from this chapter’s epigraph, however, that, despite this encounter, the centipede remains for Burroughs a creature beyond all possibility of love or creativity. The reason for this, he writes, is that “the centipede was a step to a snake, a lizard, a furred lizard, an animal ... this is [the] basis for a centipede being rejected more than any rejection: looking down on the fall we might have taken, except for that repugnant, momentary ledge” (*Last Words*, 129-130). Here, Burroughs is clearly

invoking Darwin's authority in order to posit a linear, teleological ladder (or, rather, staircase) of being, as opposed to a thinking of evolution as entanglement and reciprocity.<sup>83</sup> In this Christianised schema, evolutionary ascent reaches its apotheosis, its latest and greatest step, with "Homo Sap," and which at the same time inevitably relegates centipedes—those unimaginably and almost unbearably ancient living beings—to the beginning and thus to the bottom, to the lowest of the low.

Such a reductive history of life, however, is complicated somewhat by Burroughs' refusal of both nonhuman history and nonhuman time. Consequently for Burroughs, centipedes have not evolved since their paradoxical appearing at the "beginning" of nontime, and thus this "once" is indeed an "all at once." Indeed, it follows that this must be the case for all those "other" beings who, *once* having attained their respective and comparatively lowly steps along the *tēlos* of life, must remain there eternally hereafter. While we will come back to this shortly, and ignoring the fact that centipedes, this one and that one, have of course repeatedly both transformed themselves and being transformed, for the moment it is enough to note that, for Burroughs, the centipede is thus the rejected of the rejected, the abject being par excellence in a hierarchy of being: "For the poor rejected Pede, the ledge was permanent" (130).

We can only understand the absolute abjection of this creature, however, by understanding his or her exclusion as an inhospitable refusal of a place that has nonetheless already been taken. An exclusion, in other words, of the absolutely foreign within the domestic. To do this, it is necessary first of all to track the dichotomy of the wild and the tame as it organises and, indeed, fails to organise Burroughs' thinking of nonhuman animals. This distinction, while apparently affirming the ways of being of nonhuman animals, in fact serves only to reinscribe the exceptional humanist privilege it appears to disavow, thus remaining enchanted within a narcissistic privileging of the reflected human self. To further underscore the narcissistic functioning of this dichotomy, it will be shown too how this same schema serves to "ground" both the deep ecological perspective, and that which for Deleuze and Guattari provides the privileged access to becoming, namely "becomings-animal [*devenirs-animaux*]."

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<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, Plato also places the centipede at the foot of his hierarchy of living beings. In the *Phaedrus*, he orders animals into three groups—birds at the top, then quadrupeds, and finally those who crawl on or under the earth. In the *Timaeus*, moreover, it is the centipede who is specifically marked out (92a-b).

The division into the wild and the tame, as we shall see, serves to constrain the entire Burroughsian bestiary within the absolute conditioning of an enchanted wilderness uncontaminated by the imposition of a properly human time, a temporality which in turn presupposes language as the proper of the human. It is here, moreover, that the differences and the similarities between Burroughs' posthuman becomings-animal and those of Deleuze-Guattari become visible. In similarly positing a potential human entry into the essentially timeless wild-animal nature from out of the tame and timebound culture of a given state of affairs, both Burroughs and Deleuze-Guattari end up condemning nonhuman being to the nonexistence of "reality" without sense. A gesture, moreover, which marks becoming-*animal* as a uniquely *human* property.

Moving through these exclusive neighbourhoods of the wild and the tame as they are shared, in being *not* shared, by Deleuze-Guattari and Burroughs, I argue that such exclusivity both inhibits the beginning of ethics and naturalises the interests of capitalism. Nevertheless, it is from here, from an ignorance and a saving that is the necessity of the *méconnaissable*, that the larger question of the ethical opening, and of the risk that is the refusal to its placeholding phrasing of a countersigning recognition, can be more clearly addressed. In this, the centipede, this being of the step and the beginning and of steps and repetition which for Burroughs stands before and beyond any possibility of love, will ascend to the stage of ethics and, once there, will stage an ethics of the unrecognisable other in which "the human" potentially comes to be subversively rearticulated.

## **Shattered Love**

On the borders between fiction and documentary, between autobiography and political theory, and between philosophy and literature, the putting to work of language in Burroughs' texts serves to render explicit the impossibility of any such securely delimited domains. As with Lee's passage into the interzone of *Naked Lunch*, they leave in their wake only a convulsively negating Guard faced with the impossible task of reconstructing what was once imagined to be the unapproachable border of an unnameable frontier.

Despite this, however, and despite the later valorisation of certain nonhuman animals (cats and lemurs in particular), it is in fact language itself, the very structure of

which determines the impossibility of closure, which for Burroughs, in his own convulsive negation, constitutes the very last secure frontier at once indivisible and non-negotiable. At once frontier and evolutionary ledge, language is that final step before which every nonhuman living being eternally remains, essentially innocent of “contact” and thus of “the pain and fear and the final death” by which such contact is defined (*Cat Inside*, 70). In spite of this, insists Burroughs, contact *with* animals nonetheless preserves the singular possibility of *human* knowledge and salvation: “August 9, 1984, Thursday. My relationship with my cats has saved me from a deadly, pervasive ignorance” (46).

Such a contact, affirms Burroughs with the very last words of his *Last Words*, is the chance of a “pure love” for nonhuman animals, one which moves humans beyond the contested spaces of conflict and pain: “Only thing can resolve conflict is love, like I felt for Fletch and Ruski, Spooner and Calico. Pure love. What I feel for my cats present and past. Love? What is It? Most natural painkiller what there is” (253). This undetermined, indivisible purity of love has, however, already been corrupted, shattered by a testing animal which necessarily marks the limit of love. A limit, moreover, that it would seem is only reached by *Christian* love, by a love of one’s *neighbour*, and inscribing at its heart an ineffaceable contestation: “A centipede can be seen as a test upon which Love, like St. Francis used to make, would shatter” (252).

Indeed, anyone familiar with Burroughs’s writings cannot fail to be aware of the fearful hatred repeatedly heaped upon the abject centipede. And yet, it is not only centipedes, and not only insects such as scorpions and spiders, in whom or with whom Burroughs refuses to rejoice: “I don’t care much for rabbits. They aren’t cute at all, even the little ones. All they do is make stupid, galvanic attempts to get out of your hands, and big rabbits can give you a very nasty bite” (*Cat Inside*, 27). Perhaps then, the problem with centipedes is a combined lack of “cuteness” and refusal to reciprocate human affection—except that this clearly cannot be the case in that the other nonhuman species most often subject to Burroughs’ ire is none other than the *dog*. In this, and despite the repeated avowals of pure cat-Love, Burroughs squarely aligns himself, as we shall see, with Deleuze-Guattari and their infamous declaration that “*anyone who likes cats or dogs is a fool*” (*Thousand Plateaus*, 265). Dogs, it becomes clear, are contemptible for Burroughs because of their *domestication*, whereas cats retain their *wildness*:

The red fox, the silver fox, the bat-eared fox of Africa ... all beautiful beasts. Wolves and coyotes *in the wild condition are acceptable*. What went so hideously wrong with the domestic dog? Man molded the domestic dog in his own worst image ... self-righteous as a lynch mob, servile and vicious, replete with the vilest coprophagic perversions ... and what other animal tries to fuck your leg? Canine claims to our affection reek of contrived and fraudulent sentimentality. [...] I am not a dog hater. I do hate what man has made of his best friend. The snarl of a panther is certainly more dangerous than the snarl of a dog, but it isn't ugly. A cat's rage is beautiful, burning with a pure cat flame [...]. When you see [a dog] snarl you are looking at something that has no face of its own. A dog's rage is not his. It is dictated by his trainer. And lynch-mob rage is dictated by conditioning (*Cat Inside*, 62-3; emphasis added).

With the dog, we can now better understand the contempt reserved for the rabbit, as well as the hierarchy which underlies it: the dog is hated for his or her closeness—her proximity, familiarity and similarity—to the human. She is hated, in other words, precisely for having being dominated, for having been molded in the worst image of “Homo Sap, the Ugly Animal” (*Ghost of Chance*, 48). The rabbit too, is disliked for the *stupidity* of her machine-like inability to escape her enforced “petting”—uncared-for precisely because of her inability to resist oppression. Both big and small cats, meanwhile, are beautiful only insofar as they retain their danger and their rage—their “wildness,” in short.<sup>84</sup>

Here then, the tamed are hated (by humans) for having being tamed (by humans), for not being free. They are thus hated, might it not already be suggested, for suffering under a form of colonialisation subsequently reproduced as “natural”? One thinks here of the colonised subject who must resemble the coloniser to a degree, but nevertheless not *too* well, as we have seen with Venus Xtravaganza.

Such contempt then, is the contempt of the bound by the free. And yet, according to Burroughs, it is only the *human* animal who comes into being already inextricably bound. As such, it thus becomes clear that this contempt is precisely a properly human derision reserved for all those other, *unbounded* beings who have nevertheless been *contaminated* by these bonds. It is contempt, in other words, for

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<sup>84</sup> Here, Burroughs thus places the various species of fox much closer to the cat rather than the dog. Positioning foxes, especially the red fox (*vulpes vulpes*), into a close proximity with dogs is in fact by far the more common strategy—for reasons which will become clear—both on the level of species (which has subsequently been challenged) and along the traditional wild-tame dichotomy. Thus, with Burroughs, the red fox would seem to share in a privilege more usually reserved only, and if at all, for the “exotic” species. However, as we shall see, I do not believe that the red *urban* fox would be included by Burroughs in this list of “beautiful beasts.”

those nonhuman animals who have been contaminated by their proximity and similarity to the human. A corruption, as we will see, which comes in the sharing of the space, so to speak, of human *time*—of a temporalising and spatialising movement which has language as its condition of possibility. Put briefly, it is a contemptuous condescension for those other beings whom a properly human extension has overwritten.

Hence, Burroughs' scorn for "pets" is a consequence of humans having, through the technicity of language, imposed time upon their "naturally timeless" ways of being, a contamination rendering them unworthy of the purity of Love. It is here then, that we discover the notion of a deadly human *touch* which is never that of "contact." This touch, a touch without touching, an excluding enclosing within the extension of human spacetime, is, in other words, that which renders impossible a saving encounter with the finitude of the other. Human touching, in short, kills the chance of contact by dispossessing that which is touched of its naturally wild state: "I have eulogised the fennec fox, a creature so delicate and timorous in the wild state that he dies of fright if touched by human hands" (*Cat Inside*, 63). Despite, or because of, the deadly effacement of finitude, this properly human touch is the contaminating touch of *time*.

### **Viruses, afflictions, contaminations**

In the short novel *Ghost of Chance* (1991), Burroughs gives us the story of Libertatia, a revolutionary pirate settlement founded by Captain Mission in Madagascar. Learning of a threat to the settlement, Mission takes an overdose of a *yagé*-type hallucinogen named *indri* and enters into a vision through which is revealed the origin and prehistory of the land. One-hundred-and-sixty-million years before, Mission discovers, the "long rift" of Madagascar had split from the African mainland, leaving "a gaping wound in the earth's side" as it "moved majestically out to sea" like "a vast festive ship launched with fireworks" (16). Thereafter, Madagascar had "lain moored in enchanted calm," the home to a harmonious coexistence of species with no natural predators and providing "a vast sanctuary for the lemurs and for the delicate spirits that breathe through them" (15-16). As a result, the autochthonous Lemur People think and feel differently to



human animals, being both confused and repulsed by the concepts of time, sequence, and causality.<sup>85</sup>

This enchanted calm is shattered, however, with “the appearance of man on earth,” an appearance synonymous with “the beginning of time” (15). This “appearing” that is an “arriving” must be understood, however, in two different ways. Firstly, this arrival is the originary appearing of the human species, and thus the “arrival” for the first time *of* time necessarily takes place *in* time, that is to say, along a temporal, evolutionary narrative. Secondly, the arriving of man is at once a colonisation of extension: “Man was born in time. He lives and dies in time. Wherever he goes, he takes time with him and imposes time” (17). Temporality is thus that *in* which Man appears and at once that which Man must take *with* his self—a human property but nonetheless not properly human. Humanity thus imposes time *upon* an originary nonhuman space at the same time as *time* marks the displacement of the human *outside* of this space. Outside, that is, of an impossible timeless and deathless *spacing* that somehow remains undifferentiated, that is, remains without *space*. As a result, time for Burroughs is the mark *of* an inhuman violence which has always already alienated the human animal from nature. Hence, in coming to be, the way of being human is precisely to *mark time*, remarking an originary division which, in constituting the human, at once displaces and encloses it: “Time is a human affliction; not a human invention but a prison” (16).

“Time,” in other words, which begins with the human and in which and with which the human arrives, is thus necessarily imposed *by* the human animal alone upon a “previously” timeless environment. In this way its fairytale enchantment is contaminated by the arriving of human/time, a coming to being which paradoxically imposes itself upon other beings as a dispossessing *lack* of time—imposing the violence, conflict and pain which will ultimately render countless numbers of other animals extinct. Recalling here the “all at once” of the Burroughsian hierarchy of being, we can now better understand why the world *before* the human (in both its spatial and temporal sense)—that timeless time before time—must exist therefore in an harmonious balance of permanent changlessness in which species neither evolve nor become extinct (and ignoring thus the great disappearance announcing the end of the

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<sup>85</sup> The Lemur People, one must assume, are thus incapable of understanding this mythic narrative as it is telepathically transmitted *to* Mission and thus at once translated *for* Mission. See, for example, Mission’s interpretative reading of the landscape, 15-16.

Palaeozoic era, as well as the mass extinctions of the late Triassic, the Jurassic and, again, the late Eocene). Indeed, within “The Museum of Lost Species” Mission recalls—always for the “first time” in human time—the (non)memory of this perfect stasis, rediscovered “first of all” in the museum’s timeless memorials displaying “all of the species ... alive in dioramas of their natural habitats” (51).

It will be necessary to make a return visit to Libertatia’s museum—a museum that is “not exactly a museum” (51) insofar as encountered therein are living corpses rather than zombie flesh—in the next chapter. Back outside in the heat of the pirate settlement, however, we discover that it is precisely its *u-topos* within the relation of the time-bound and the timeless which gives to Libertatia its revolutionary aspect. Appearing “already timeless as houses in a fairyland” (3), Libertatia constitutes an inadequate point of contact between lemurs and humans that calls to this Edenic time before time. Thus refusing the quasi-Hegelian narrative of a prerecorded *human* future predicated upon conflict, sequence and causality, Libertatia’s having taken place—a demonstration “for all to see that three hundred souls can coexist in relative harmony with each other, with their neighbours, and with the ecosphere of flora and fauna” (8)—marks instead a rupture within the prediction of historical time which is nothing less than the definition of revolution.

As such, it is perhaps not by chance that the lemur is valued above all other animals, in that prosimians are thought to be the earliest primates, dating back some sixty million years and thus predating *Homo erectus*—and thus paradoxically “predating” the appearing of *time* as such—by at least fifty-eight of those millions.<sup>86</sup> In the peculiarly Burroughsian sense of (pre)existing in an eternal stasis that has nevertheless somehow ended in becoming an evolutionary step on the way to the human, lemurs are thus “proto-” and “arche-typically” prehuman, insofar as they are at once the most similar and the most distant from man. A close family “contact,” in other words, across the furthest reaches of time and thus beyond time itself—humans through the looking-glass, so to speak.

This inter-familial division, however, is for Burroughs in fact *prior* to the annihilating arriving of the human, an emergence into bondage which can never cease

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<sup>86</sup> The visionary Captain Mission would presumably contest this dating, insofar as lemurs must have appeared “at once” and at one with Madagascar’s split from the mainland if The Lemur People are to remain suspended throughout its “timeless” 158 million year period—an oxymoronic syntagm which to a degree encapsulates our problematic.

to inhabit and impose the inhuman violence of time, in that this bondage has as its condition the division of the (not yet) human by language. More precisely, “the human” *is* the abyssal coming into being of language and *thus* time. Time, in other words, is not the taking place of the human, rather, being-human is being-temporal *insofar* as language is the *taking* place of the temporal-human’s having *taken* place. What distinguishes humans from “other animals,” writes Burroughs, is that only humans—

can make information available through writing or oral tradition to other Sap humans outside his area of contact and to future generations. This distinction led Count Korzybski to call man “a time-binding animal,” and it can be reduced to one word: *language* (48).

Clearly, “language” for Burroughs is reducible to human verbal language, that is to say, to “the word.” It thus becomes impossible for Burroughs, despite the Mugwumps who project pictograms and the Reptiles who communicate through the movements of green cartilage fans in *Naked Lunch*, to consider *nonhuman* languages even within his own, relatively broad definition of language as “the representation of an object or process ... *by something it is not*” (48).

This is not, however, simply an unquestioned speciesism, and nor does this lack of the *as such* condemn “the animal” to a comparative poverty, as it does for Heidegger. It is rather the case, as we shall see, that nonhuman animals cannot “have” language because, for Burroughs, the revolutionary reversal and displacement that is the “rubbing out of the word” is the possibility of an human *entry* (and indeed, an impossible *reentry*) into the mythical “wordless world” of the prehuman order of being (50). It is a distinction, in other words, which preserves for Burroughs and for humanity alone the possibility of *entering* a world with neither language nor time. The revolutionary possibility, that is to say, figured always inadequately (in that it takes place *in* and *of* language) by Libertatia, of accessing the wordless worldless world of and as the *posthuman* animal.

As we have seen in our previous discussions of Blanchot and Heidegger, however, just as there can be no time—and no finitude, sense, language, becoming, or historicity—without *a priori* iterability, equally importantly there can be no iterability without finitude, sense, time, becoming, and historicity. And thus, in positing a timeless—hence undying and undifferentiated—preoriginary domain of animality, Burroughs denies all of this to nonhuman animals. Within this economy, as we have

seen time and again, the zootechnical genocide committed every day in the pursuit of profit is thus naturalised, insofar as the nonsubstitutable deaths of nonhuman animals continue to be rendered meaningless and thus unthinkable. Even more than this, however, is that, in going by way of an apparent affirmation of a “wild” Nature from which “Man” is excluded, Burroughs in fact further serves the death machines of capitalism in specifically devalorising those particular nonhuman groups systematically oppressed by contemporary economic structures. This expression of “pure animal Love,” in other words, this singular reiteration of the biblical and Promethean traditions, carries with it a further, absolutely devastating consequence: the expulsion from the sanctuary of “Nature” of all those contaminated “others” with whom we willingly or unwillingly share our space.

It is in fact this contested space of temporal contamination which for Burroughs organises the distinction between the wild and the tame. In that time presupposes language, so the imposition of temporality constitutes the corruption of a certain “domestic” group of essentially speechless (and thus undifferentiated) animals by language. The “language virus,” which divides the human against itself and marks it as a temporal being, in this way contaminates those nonhuman animals that are “touched” by the human hands of inhuman time. Hence, for Burroughs, dogs represent a particularly “hideous” translation, having been “remolded,” written over by man in and as man’s “own worst image,” they cease to be animals (*Cat Inside*, 63). Consumed, interiorised by the virus, the face and the rage of “the domestic dog” are thus violently effaced, overwritten with a human metaphor.

Here, there are obvious parallels with Deleuze-Guattari’s molarised “pets,” those “sentimental bow-wows” kept captive in the kennels of analysts (*Thousand Plateaus*, 32), “each with its own petty history ... draw[ing] us into narcissistic contemplation ... the better to discover a daddy, a mommy, a little brother behind them” (265). The Burroughsian dog too has been deprived of his or her natural state of wildness, made over into a material anthropomorphism. Despite this, and again in common with Deleuze-Guattari, the Burroughsian “domestic” dog perhaps retains a *virtual* wildness. Burroughs does not, he writes, hate *dogs*, that is, he does not hate the original, virile wild dogs that supposedly existed prior to their mutual entanglement with human animals. Rather he claims to hate only what has been made *of* them and what has been done *with* them, a hatred which implies there can be no possibility of mutual (ex)change. Cats, it thus becomes clear, are privileged by virtue of being the

sole companion animals who, insofar as they retain their own face and rage and thus their originary being, have nonetheless resisted human subjugation.

In summary, the “pet” can thus be defined as a nonhuman animal who submits to, or is subjugated to, the time of human extension, a submission and subjugation for which they are treated with scorn and contempt. The “sentimentality” attributed by Burroughs to human animals by way of the mirror of “contrived” canine *mimēsis* is, nevertheless, a charge at least as likely to be levelled at those humans who value their *feline* companions. Deleuze-Guattari, for example, in equating the “domesticated” with the “foolish,” the “petty” and the “sentimental,” have nothing but scorn for the “elderly woman who honors and cherishes” her “little cat or dog” (*Thousand Plateaus*, 270).

### **Uninvited: the other racism**

The scorn reserved by Burroughs for the *domesticated* transforms into hate, however, into absolute rejection, when the foreigner, uninvited, takes their place *in* the place of the domestic. The imposition, that is to say, of “other” beings *upon* human extension: those beings with whom one is *compelled* to share one’s time and space but who are not “us.” It is here, as we shall see, that the absolute unworthiness of the centipede, that test which shatters Love, thus finds—or rather *loses*—his or her place according to this schema of the wild and the tame.

Occupying the limit of the liminal space dividing tame from wild, the limit-other that is the centipede is at once the most distant and most close: the illegal, nondomesticated alien *within* the domestic, within the familiar and the familial. In this sense, the centipede is for Burroughs the polar opposite of the cat. Whereas cats retains their timeless wildness despite the “touch” of death that is human extension, those unbearably ancient centipedes, arthropod kin to scorpions and cockroaches, remain always beyond such oppressive “touch” whilst nevertheless placing themselves within the domestic domain—and thus *taking* our time—against all human attempts to the contrary. Hence centipedes (again, like cockroaches) can never be considered “wild” according to the dominant, spectacular sense of the term.

In contrast therefore to the *exoticism* of the (impossibly) distant Other, the centipede marks the furthest limit of the foreign within the domestic, illegally occupying the “home” of Man (a property albeit only recently acquired). Constituted

thus as the worst of the worst—worse even than his colonised canine compatriot—this hatred of the centipede thus discloses as its condition a hatred of the illegal immigrant conjoined with a romantic, spectacular exoticism. Rather than the beginning of ethics therefore, the affirmation of the “wild,” depending upon the exclusion of those “others” who share our place but who are not, however, “us,” reiterates instead a conservative valorisation of the self-same. It is founded, in other words, not upon the affirmation of the other, but upon hatred and narcissistic spectacularisation. Nonplaced within the capitalist machinery of the wild-tame dichotomy, such insect ways of being on the threshold, insistent, illegal, and unassimilable, are thus included *as* excluded, as that which is beyond hospitality. And yet, returning to our central point, it is just such an absolute exclusion from closeness, an exclusion designated by hate and murder, which serves exactly to efface our originary relatedness.

Figured as that which “contaminates” the purity of domestic property, be it the body, the home, or the nation, this group of beings placed-out-of-place—lice, cockroaches, rats, foxes, flies, fleas, slugs, snakes, even gnats, and so on—thus find themselves collected within categories marked for extermination, excluded thus as “feral,” “vermin” or “pests.” Never fully determined, however, such categories are rather always open to negotiation, a porosity which always betrays their limit “otherness” with the marking of historical contingency, and thus with the demands of Capital. One thus understands the particular importance placed upon the maintenance of such slippery categories as “vermin” (generally a hindrance to commodification and a non-respecter of property boundaries), and “feral” (generally useless to commodification but protected to some degree by proximity to either or, more usually, both, the categories of “pet” and “wild”).

Furthermore, as we saw in the previous chapter, the reproduction of such internal “outsides” cannot be dissociated from other regulatory ideals. One thinks here most obviously of blood-and-soil nationalisms, of the aggravated narcissism of the racist desire to “purify” the “body” of the nation of contaminants, of Jews reconfigured as both “lice” and “rats” in Nazi Germany, of the Hutus in Rwanda referring to the Tutsis as “cockroaches,” of the Palestinians similarly considered “cockroaches” by the Israeli army, and so on.<sup>87</sup> This too recalls us to the earlier discussion of Butler’s *Bodies*

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<sup>87</sup> While the link between humanism and nationalism will be explored in more detail in the next chapter, a particularly interesting example can be found in Jean Rhys’s 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (London: Penguin, 1997). There, the white Creoles are named “white

*That Matter*, in which it was argued that women as well as (nonwhite) non-nationals are ultimately reproduced as foreign to the domain of the properly human. They are, moreover, foreign only to the degree that they are constituted *as* foreign within the Same by reference to the absolute outside of the *alogon* animal. In this way, women too are “domesticated,” written over by a dominant patriarchal order which treats with contempt its “feminine (out)side.” The nonwhite “other,” meanwhile, finds itself constituted as the fearsomely “feral”—i.e. unassimilable—immigrant in contrast to the safe “exoticism” of the impossibly distant cultural spectacle. This is not, however, to suggest an *analogical* relation between these constructions. Rather, they all rearticulate each other, reproducing the subject at and as the nexus of multiple vectors of power.

Moreover, it is not simply fortuitous that, amid this wild-tame dichotomy maintained by the liminal otherness of the foreign in the domestic, a further grouping of nonhuman animals *for all practical purposes* disappears. Neither sentimental “pets” nor burning with the rage of the “wild,” so-called “food,” “work,” and “laboratory” animals find themselves almost completely effaced, whilst nonetheless partaking of the construction of “the woman” and “the immigrant.” As we shall see, the reproduction of these other “other” animals as senseless simulacra thus reserves the possibility of their value-free instrumentalisation, even as the “purity” of the wild-tame binary is reiterated. Silently situated somewhere between the domesticated and the unassimilable foreigner, the so-called “common-sense” attitude towards instrumentalised animals thus moves from contempt to despoliation, whilst stopping short of hatred.

Hence, returning to Burroughs’ *Ghost of Chance*, we discover that industrially commodified animal species, while occasionally and derisively dealt with in passing, for the most part remain silent and invisible, and this in spite of the novel’s explicit concern with the negative impact of human instrumentalist thinking upon other species, and on lemurs in particular. The exploitation of nonhuman species, for example, is both marked and unremarked in a short passage describing a group of (presumably “native” Madagascan) herdsmen who are busily engaged in providing for “their worthless zebus, a small black hump-backed breed of ox” (32). Here then, the native zebus *used* by the herdsmen are absolutely without value according to Burroughs’ schema. Small,

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cockroaches” by some of the native Dominicans and, immediately after the burning of Mr. Mason’s colonial mansion, one Dominican insists that they kill Mason and his extended family of “white niggers” because “You mash centipede, mash it, leave one little piece and it grow again” (23).

black and deformed, and thus ugly, inferior copies of the “original” ox, the only worth of these zebus is their use-value and, presumably, their exchange value solely among the men of the herd. Their instrumentalisation, in short, has rendered them worthless as living beings, made over into mere metaphors of the life they have lost.

These same herdsmen, whilst foraging for fuel to maintain their worthless possessions, accidentally release the exhibits of the Museum of Lost Species. Containing examples of every species whose chance has been lost—presumably as a result of human extension—and therefore including viruses as well as animals, these various viral strains completely exhaust the abilities of the scientists hired to deal with them. “As one viral strain burned itself out,” writes Burroughs, “or in rare instances when the scientists finally perfected a vaccine or treatment, then another plague would take its place. Back to square one, Professor” (37). Precisely how scientists perfect such vaccines, however, is a question which for Burroughs, despite his “pure Love” for the wildness of primates and felines, apparently does not arise.

We can now better understand why the division of nonhuman animals into either the “wild” or the “tame” is, above all, a question of familiarity, that is to say, of dogmatism: of *the disavowal of the opening of ethics* which slumbers within an apparent affirmation of “other” others. Indeed, Barbara Noske is quite correct when she describes the prioritising of wild animals over their “domestic” kin as “the other racism” (*Beyond Boundaries*, xii). It is, in short, the support of contempt, despoliation, and hatred—a “pervasive ignorance” with absolutely devastating consequences. To further illustrate this, I thus turn in the next section to the somewhat more subtle wild-tame dichotomy which underwrites Deleuze and Guattari’s key notion of “becoming-animal,” only to find there the same “grounding” exclusion of the foreign within the domestic. We will find too, the same categorical contempt reserved precisely for the victims of their own schema.

### **The human privilege of becoming-animal**

Famously (or infamously), in the chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus* entitled “1730—Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible ...,” Deleuze and Guattari divide nonhuman animals into three categories: Oedipal animals, State animals, and demonic animals. Oedipal animals are “individuated animals, family pets,



sentimental”—those animals which Burroughs argues have been moulded in Man’s own worst image—, whereas State animals are those animals treated so as “to extract from them series or structures, archetypes or models.” Finally, the valorised category of demonic animals are those “pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale [*à meutes et affects, et qui font multiplicité, devenir, population, conte*]” (265).

Having nothing to do with filiation, such a “pack” or “band” rather presupposes *contagion*: “affects and powers, involutions that grip every animal in a becoming just as [*non moins*] powerful as that of the human being with the animal” (266). At first reading, it would appear that Deleuze-Guattari are here giving to nonhuman animals an access to a “becoming” that is equal, in power, in affect, to those becomings open to the human animal. Indeed, this is one of the main reasons for the recent interest in Deleuze-Guattari’s philosophy evinced from within animal studies. Upon closer reading, however, it soon transpires that the equality marked by that “just as” is just as quickly refused. Indeed, in being “just as” or “no less” [*non moins*] powerful, an implicit division between a nonhuman animal-becoming and a human becoming-animal is already remarked.

Before moving on to that discontinuity, a discontinuity which in fact serves to prohibit nonhuman becoming despite its commensurate powerfulness, it should first of all be noted that these three categories, Oedipal, State and pack, are far less secure and far more complex than is generally taken to be the case. To begin with, these divisions are divisions only of degree and of contingency:

There is always the possibility that a given animal ... will be treated as a pet [*soit traité comme un animal familier*] ... it is also possible for any animal to be treated [*être traité*] in the mode of the pack ... Even the cat, even the dog. ... Yes, any animal is or can be a pack, but to varying degrees of vocation that make it easier or harder to discover the multiplicity, or multiplicity-grade [*de teneur en multiplicité*], an animal contains (actually or virtually according to the case) (265-6).

Moreover, we can see that what have been thus divided are *not* “actual” nonhuman animals. They denote, that is, neither a zoological classification nor even what for Deleuze-Guattari constitutes the *reality* of nonhuman animals. Rather, the categories represent the three possible ways in which nonhuman animals might be *treated* [*traité*], that is, in which they might be constituted *in relation to humans*: a dog can be treated

as a pack, a panther can be treated *as* a “pet” or *as* a model. In short, Oedipal, State and demonic are not three ways of being-animal, but rather three ways in which humans may produce other animals. We are thus contained within an (actual or virtual) *human* domain, constrained within the anthro-tropo-logical machine of human recognition and of the proper and improper ways of re-presenting a nonhuman being. Whether that is *as* a “pet” or *as* a “pack,” this exceptional tropological function, this solely human “as,” is itself symptomatic of what by now is an all too familiar human-animal discontinuity.

What then, do Deleuze-Guattari consider the “reality” of nonhuman animals, outside of their categorisation? Only in answering this question does it become possible to understand the privilege accorded to the category of the demonic, a category which, first of all, is not in fact that of a band or pack of *animals* (plural). Rather, for Deleuze-Guattari the animal—that is, *this* singular animal, this nonsubstitutable living being more commonly defined as a single, autonomous organism—is always already pack: “We do not wish to say that certain animals live in packs [*vivent en meutes*] ... What we are saying is that every animal is fundamentally [*d’abord*] a band, a pack” (264). “The pack,” they continue, *is* “animal reality” (267). In other words, every individuated *nonhuman* animal *is*, first of all, *is at first* [*d’abord*], a pack. This *is* “its” mode, “its” way of being rather than simply a quality or a distinguishing *mark*: “it [*sic*] has pack modes, rather than characteristics, even if further distinctions interior to these modes are called for” (264, translation modified).

Every nonhuman animal thus “is” in *a* mode of being-pack, rather than “pack” being simply or only a *mark*, constituted by an human-animal relation, *of* and *as* “animal reality.” Every animal *is* a pack then, but not every animal is treated *as* a pack. In being treated or constituted *as* an Oedipal or State animal, this being-pack that an animal contains is rendered merely “virtual” in that her “multiplicity-grade” is necessarily hard to discover. By contrast, those animals constituted *as* demonic pack-animals, insofar as the metaphorical vehicle that is such a relation properly signifies, or at least corresponds, to the essential “reality” of nonhuman animals, therefore retain *in and as that relation* the “actuality,” the sense, of their “proper” way of being. It is just such a “vocation” which keeps them at the greatest distance from both “petty” human “sentimentality” and the reduction to state characteristics. A proper vocation which, in short, ensures they remain both “wild” and “real.”

Demonic pack animals, as we have seen, form a multiplicity presupposing contagion rather than filiation, presupposing involutions rather than hereditary

production and sexual reproduction. “Bands,” Deleuze-Guattari write, both “human and animal, proliferate by contagion, epidemics, battlefields, and catastrophes” (266). However, it is in following this catastrophic contagion or contamination that we discover, in what is perhaps the central passage of the “1730” plateau, the positing of an absolute separation:

These multiplicities with heterogeneous terms, cofunctioning by contagion, enter certain *assemblages* [*agencements*]; it is there that human beings effect their becomings-animal [*opère ses devenirs-animaux*]. ... The pack is simultaneously animal reality and the reality of the becoming-animal of the human being; contagion is simultaneously animal populating [*peuplement animal*], and propagation of the animal populating [or “stocking”] of the human being [*et propagation du peuplement animal de l’homme*] (267, translation modified).

Being-pack therefore *is* the reality of animal, the way of being of animals is the entering of assemblages by the contagion that is animal populating. At the same time, the pack *is* the reality of human *becoming*-animal, in contrast to *being*-human, insofar as the human being can *effect* [*opère*] a becoming-animal by *entering* the being-pack of a certain assemblage that is a contagion which propagates or passes over the animal populating of the human. The way of being-pack that is animal populating can, in other words, be passed on or over to human beings, enabling them to *enter* the assemblages which *effect* their becoming. Only in this way can the human being become animal. This is not to say, however, that the human enters the *reality* of the animal. Rather, as we shall see, this “reality” of every other animal remains absolutely discontinuous with human being.

Despite their scorn for “ridiculous evolutionary classifications à la [Konrad] Lorenz, according to which there are inferior packs and superior societies” (264), Deleuze-Guattari not only reduce *all* other animals to the general category of “the animal” in opposition to “the human” (albeit while calling for further “internal” differentiation), they in fact place human culture over against “the true Nature [*la vraie Nature*]” of every other living being. This “true Nature”—the totality of “[u]nnatural participations” of nonhuman becoming—, “spans the kingdoms of nature” (266-7, translation modified). Becoming, in other words, the entering of assemblages by contagion, is precisely the reality of all *nonhuman* being. “Each multiplicity,” they write, “is symbiotic; its becoming ties together animals, plants, microorganisms, mad particles, a whole galaxy” (275). Thus, whereas for Deleuze-Guattari “the human”

retains the potential to *enter* becomings-animal (which is not an animal becoming), the nonhuman animal “exists” in a *permanent* becoming, “in” this “truly natural” mode of being-pack that “is” the One-All of Life.

It thus follows that the human is always already outside of the “true Nature” of permanent becoming. Consequently, as we shall see, humans are necessarily condemned to the “stupidity [*bêtise*]” of language, and henceforth to relating to animals *as* animals, be that *as* Oedipal, *as* State, or *as* demonic. We are now better placed to understand the valorisation—the higher degree—of the demonic *as* category, insofar as the determination of the categorical animal predicate relates precisely to *human entry*, or its refusal. Always already outside of “Nature,” the human being nevertheless comes to *approach* true Nature from which it is disposed through an anthropomorphic *positing* of the demonic. In other words, the metaphorical relation—the *as* such which at once remarks the displacement of the human from Nature—between the “demonic” and the multiplicity-grade that “is” the reality of animals performs and, in so doing *discloses*, its discontinuity from human being. A disclosure, moreover, which is at once the possibility of *entering* a properly *human* becoming.

This opposition between becoming and being, in a vertiginous oscillation between figure and figured, is represented on one side by the “demonic” wolf, and by the molarised Oedipal dog on the other. Whereas even *within* the anthropomorphising relation the wolf retains, in her distance from the molarised human, her essence as an “actual” animal, the essential reality of the dog has, by contrast, become merely virtual, and has become so, yet again, as a result of “contamination” by a properly human iterability and thus temporality.

Moreover, it is this oscillation, this undecidability, which permits the making-virtual of the reality of an animal *in relation to the human*: dogs *can* be pack in that they *are* pack, but *as* (anthropomorphic molarised) dogs this being-pack is effaced. An effacement which ensures the impossibility of disclosing a potential *human* becoming by way of an encounter with an Oedipal or State animal. A dog, however, *this* nonsubstitutable dog, *has* pack as his or her way of being, a reality which as such cannot be expropriated without her ceasing to be a dog. Without, in other words, this dog ceasing to be nonhuman and thus becoming human instead—an impossible expropriation within Deleuze-Guattari’s human-animal division. For Deleuze-Guattari, therefore, the question of the animal is always and only a question of how “animals” are *treated* (*traité*) within a discourse which remains essentially human.

Given the contempt displayed by Deleuze-Guattari for “actual” so-called “pets,” however, it would nevertheless seem that the proximity to the human *does* somehow, albeit impossibly, impinge upon the way of being-animal. An anthropomorphism made literal, made *flesh*, so to speak, dogs and cats are thus somehow humanised *in spite of* their essential becoming. Within the reading being attempted here, however, *both* the “tame” and the “wild” are necessarily pure anthropomorphisms, a hierarchical ranking *only* in relation to the potential disclosure of *human* becoming. Nonetheless, this division of a putatively homogeneous “animal reality” solely for human *purposes*—as the *means* of a theoretical disclosure of human *ends*—has devastating results for those nonsubstitutable living beings who fall outside of the valorised category. As we saw with Burroughs, such contempt for the “pet” and, to an even greater extent, for those unmarked categories of “instrumentalised” animals and of the undomesticable within the domestic, *thus amounts to a simple prejudice for the victim of its own posited schema*.

Insofar as it discloses—as a purely anthropocentric concern—becoming *as such*, with “the Animal *is* pack” the entire economy of Deleuze-Guattari’s becomings thus finds its centre. Becomings-animal, they write, “are segments occupying a median region. On the near side, we encounter becomings-women, becomings-child ... On the far side, we find becoming-elementary, -cellular, -molecular, and even becomings-imperceptible” (274). *Between the betweens* in that it occupies the privileged place of entry, such a placing necessarily cannot be a horizontal measure of closeness or distance to the molarised human being. At the same time, however, insofar as the undifferentiated “existence” of nonhuman animals “is” permanent becoming, neither can it be positioned along a vertical hierarchy.<sup>88</sup> There can, in short, be neither measure nor order precisely because nonhuman being *is* becoming. A permanent becoming which is at once the paradox of *timeless stasis*, in that there can be no rupture, no revolutionary coming to be in its absolute dissolution. In other words, a nonhuman animal cannot come to be *other* because “the animal” *is* becoming. Being human, therefore, is precisely to reserve for itself alone the potential for becoming other, for which “animal reality” provides the entry and the *vehicle*.

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<sup>88</sup> See *Thousand Plateaus*: “The error we must guard against is to believe that there is a kind of logical order to this string, these crossings or transformations. It is already going too far to postulate an order descending from the animal to the vegetable, then to molecules, to particles” (275).

Becoming-animal is thus for Deleuze-Guattari an *essentially* human affair. Having nothing to do with animals, becoming is rather a human property: the *becoming* human of human *being*. Furthermore, for Deleuze-Guattari “the Animal”—and indeed, “the true Nature” that is the totality of nonhuman being, of the One-All of Life—is always already excluded from this circular movement from anthropojection to point of entry that is access to the being of becoming from within the molarised everyday. Here then, we discover a similar structural disavowal, albeit substituting “becoming” for “knowing,” as that which for Heidegger, as we have seen, gives to the human Dasein alone both the “*possibility* of existence” and “a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowing” (*Being and Time*, 62, 195). The “demonic” animal in this sense provides for Deleuze-Guattari their own point of departure. And yet, it still remains to ask, how is a *permanent* becoming possible? How do such becomings *take* place, yet without *making* sense?

It is here that we find a certain hesitancy when, in their discussion of Lévi-Strauss, Deleuze-Guattari raise the question of what, or who, an animal comes to *be* in becoming: “Lévi-Strauss is always encountering these rapid acts by which a human becomes animal at the same time as the animal becomes ... (Becomes what? Human, or something else?)” (262). Given the “reality” of permanent nonhuman becoming, the question remains necessarily unanswerable. “Becoming,” write Deleuze-Guattari, “produces nothing other than itself” (262). However, “in” the pure potentiality *as such* that is permanent becoming, and as we have seen in the previous chapters, nothing can *be* produced (or, rather, *reproduced*) in that it necessarily consists of the suspension and withholding of all actualised possibilities, and is thus precisely that which “I” can never experience. And indeed, as will become clear, it is precisely this “I” which is refused by Deleuze-Guattari to all but human being, thus dissolving nonhuman being within the impossibility of possibility that is Nietzsche’s well of eternity.

Hence, as both entry and model for becoming, animals initially appear as valorised above the human animal, and yet, this is a would-be valorisation which takes the very thing being valorised away from nonhuman animals and reserves it for the human alone. Animals remain suspended in the senseless undifferentiation of ahistorical stasis, a permanent fluid (non)assemblage of eternal (non)becoming.

Animals, in other words, lack the becoming-space of time and the becoming-time of space. In contrast, it is only the time-bound human—time-bound in being disposed outside the “true Nature” that is perpetual becoming—who can thus *enter into*

an assemblage. “The human” *becomes*, in other words, only at the borderline between “being-human” and “true Nature.” The human, that is to say, comes to be at and as the limit of finite “human being” and infinite being *as such*, on the border between the possible and the impossibility of possibility. In becoming, write Deleuze-Guattari, “the demon[ic] functions as the borderline of an animal pack into which the human being passes or *on which* his or her becoming takes place, by contagion” (272, emphasis added). Here, Deleuze-Guattari are once again differentiating between the contagion that is “animal populating” and the “*propagation*” of the “animal populating *of* the human being” (267). Between, that is to say, the way of being of nonhuman animals and at once that *on which* human becoming takes place. Here then, there is an absolute discontinuity between Man and Nature, with the latter the eternal background *upon which*, at the border, human animals alone can affect their becomings-other by way of the demonic.

### Deeply ecological Deleuze-Guattari

This distinction between humanity and true Nature thus places Deleuze-Guattari’s project in proximity with the essentialist definitions of “wild nature” as posited by deep ecologists such as Arne Naess, George Sessions, and Bill Devall.<sup>89</sup> Such deep ecological representations of nature, as Barbara Noske writes,

tend to be part of a wilderness ethic which totally overlooks sentient individuals in favour of species, collections of species and habitats of species [one thinks here too of Burroughs, and of those deathless, timeless museum exhibits]. Deep ecologists give narrow and essentialist definitions of nature. The only nature worth talking about is wild. As a result, domesticated nature, feral nature, or anything which does not constitute “the wild”—including humans themselves—tends to be disqualified as nature. *It is not the real thing.* ... For deep ecology the dichotomy between humanity and nature is final (*Beyond Boundaries*, xi; emphasis added).

One can thus begin to understand why a reading of Deleuze, with or without Guattari, which aligns his project with that of deep ecology is not necessarily a misreading. Robert Hurley, for example, detects the connection even in Deleuze’s early text

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<sup>89</sup> For a related critique, see Bruno Latour *Politics of Nature*, 26-29.

*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1970), claiming that Deleuze in fact offers a model thus far lacking in deep ecologist “modalities of interaction” (“Introduction,” ii).

With a clear reference to Deleuze’s later work with Guattari, Hurley describes this model as “the composition of affective relations between individuals, together with the ‘plane of consistency’ *on which* they interact, that is, their ‘environment’” (ii, emphasis added). While this notion of “individuals” (inter)acting “*on*” or *upon* their “environment” already suggests a very traditional dichotomy, Hurley touches on the specific problematic being traced here when he affirms that this “environment” is “not just a reservoir of information ... but also a field of forces whose actions await experiencing. In a *human* sense, it can be called the unconscious, or at least the ground *on which* the unconscious is constructed” (ii). Here then, the “unconscious” is the properly human, and is constructed *upon* the (natural) environment.

I will return to this notion of the Deleuzian unconscious shortly, but first of all a few prefatory remarks are required. As we have seen, for Deleuze-Guattari and for Hurley, “true Nature” is relegated to a timeless background of permanent becoming from which only humans are excluded and which, in being *entered* in those exceptional encounters Deleuze-Guattari call becomings, can only ever be written *upon*. Compare this then with Devall’s definition of deep ecology, and in particular with its presupposed human exceptionalism: deep ecology, he writes, seeks “a new metaphysics, epistemology, cosmology, and environmental ethics of the *person/planet*” (cit. Wolfe “Old Orders,” 23; emphasis added).

In the opposite direction, one can similarly detect something of deep ecology’s “macho ethic” in the structure of Deleuze and Guattari’s becomings, insofar as nonhuman animals provide the site for an active human *entry* into becoming, effecting itself *upon* the receptacle that is true Nature in what is at once a masculine, phallicised penetration and (be)coming over of the exoticised timeless wild. Man never exists-in-relation with other animals, but rather and necessarily *enters* (a presumably *feminine*) Nature *from* outside. Here we find the same essentialist romantic *topos* which both underlies Aldo Leopold’s liberalist “land-ethic” and which organises the deep ecological defence of hunting.

Given the entangled vectors of power we are continuing to track here, it is not by chance that such a defence, in at least one of its major variants (what Marti Kheel calls the “holy hunter” defence), depends upon the claim that the nonhuman animal chooses to end her life for the benefit of the (generally male) human hunter. A claim



which “has no more validity than the idea that a woman who is raped ‘asked for it’ or ‘willingly’ gave herself to the rapist” (Kheel “License to Kill,” 104).<sup>90</sup>

Returning to Robert Hurley’s deep ecological reading of Deleuze, we find that Hurley reaffirms without question the decentring of consciousness by the unconscious as a solely human property. Indeed, it is precisely this traditional exceptionalism which “grounds” Deleuze’s relegation of the nonhuman world to that of a timeless background. It is thus far from incidental that, in his reading of the place of *bêtise* (“stupidity”) in Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, Derrida refers to an “unconscious” which is “inconsistent.”<sup>91</sup> For Deleuze, as Derrida shows, *bêtise* is “a problem of thinking” that is proper to man alone, indissociable from its relation to individuation as such which operates, as groundless ground (*Ungrund*), beneath all forms (“Transcendental ‘Stupidity’,” 49). Animals, by contrast, “are in a sense forewarned [*en quelque sorte prémunis*] against this ground, protected by their explicit forms” (Deleuze *Difference and Repetition*, 190; cit. Derrida “Transcendental ‘Stupidity’,” 51). It is only the human, therefore, who “remains nevertheless as an undetermined freedom in relation with this groundless ground, and that’s where [a] properly human stability comes from” (“Transcendental ‘Stupidity’,” 56).

Proceeding to put this distinction into question from both sides, Derrida argues, first, for the necessity of a *nonhuman* relation to this ground that is “as abyssal as with man” and, second, as to the impossibility of an absolute distinction between explicit (animal) and implicit (human) forms. In so doing, he ultimately discloses the very traditional gesture underlying the Deleuzian human-animal distinction: that of the properly human capacity to constitute itself as an “I,” and thus of the identity of *bêtise* and “the thing of the I, of the ego” (58). Thus, writes Deleuze,

Stupidity is neither the ground nor the individual, but rather this relation in which individuation brings the ground to the surface without being able to give it form (this ground rises by means of the I, penetrating deeply into the possibility of thought and constituting the unrecognised in every

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<sup>90</sup> On the philosophical/mysticism of what Kheel calls “holy hunters,” see the works of deep ecologists Holmes Rolston, Paul Shepard and, in particular, Gary Snyder.

<sup>91</sup> See the fifth and sixth seminars collected in *The Beast and the Sovereign* and, in a slightly different English language version, in “The Transcendental ‘Stupidity’ (*Bêtise*) of Man and the Becoming-Animal According to Deleuze” (2002). As Derrida himself demonstrates throughout, the translation of *bêtise* by *stupidity* is far from satisfactory (as indeed is the point made, in different ways, by both Derrida and Deleuze), and hence in the following it will for the large part be left untranslated.

recognition) (*Difference and Repetition*, 190; cit. Derrida “Transcendental ‘Stupidity’,” 57)

As we have seen, however, nonhuman animals cannot be excluded from this “transcendental stupidity” which constitutes “the unrecognised in every recognition,” in that such a *bêtise* is precisely that of the *trace*, the technicity at and as the origin of all living being by which life outlives itself.

### **Burroughs with Deleuze, the fault**

Central here is that the structure of iterability—and of the indissociability of the *taking* place and the having *taken* place that is this “relation in which individuation brings the ground to the surface without being able to give it form”—refused to nonhuman animals by Deleuze in 1968 remains to organise Deleuze-Guattari’s human-animal distinction in *A Thousand Plateaus*. As with Burroughs, and by way of the wild-tame dichotomy, Deleuze-Guattari also reserve for humanity alone the possibility of encountering the timeless *immediacy* of “true Nature” at and as the limit of language. And again, as with Burroughs, Deleuze-Guattari posit an undying and undifferentiated preoriginary domain of animality—an essential dissolution of Life which renders as senseless the singular deaths of nonhuman animals. Finally, Deleuze-Guattari too exclude from the “truth” of “Nature” all of the nonhuman beings improperly contaminated by the anthro-tropo-logical machine of human recognition.

Moreover, because for Deleuze-Guattari nonhuman animals exist in permanent becoming, we can now understand why they *must* leave open the question of who or what a nonhuman animal becomes in becoming. Insofar as an animal cannot *become* human, which is precisely *the exception from, and the lack of*, the eternal becoming that is the reality of the animal, she or he can therefore never become *anything* or *anyone* at all. Indeed, for Deleuze-Guattari an animal—*this* dog or *that* wolf—is never an “I,” never a “who” or even a “what,” never a “he” or a “she” or an “it.” Furthermore, “the human” may *enter* a (properly human) becoming only because he or she is excluded from the reality of the animal, an exceptionalism which presupposes the constitution of the human in originary lack. It is this “lack” which, insofar as it constitutes the plane of transcendence, reserves the possibility of human

becomings-animal or, better, of becoming-*other* than human *being*. In short, the human, and the human alone, is constituted in and as the lack that is *bêtise*, in and as the unrecognisable, the *méconnaissance*, which exceeds all recognition.

In being refused entry into language and thus finitude, as we saw with the reading of Burroughs, nonhuman ways of being thus lack everything predicated upon this properly human lack: not only technics, language, time, and historicity, but also society, politics, ethics, law, and historiology.<sup>92</sup> This notion of an originary human lack is, of course, very familiar, belonging as it does to what Derrida calls “the tried and true biblical and Promethean tradition” (*The Animal*, 122). That we should discover this tradition as supporting the valorisation of the wild in writers as different from one another as Burroughs and Deleuze is perhaps not that surprising however. Indeed, as Derrida writes, one finds “the same dominant” throughout Western philosophical discourse, “the same recurrence of a schema that is in truth invariable” (45). A schema, Derrida continues, in which—

what is proper to man, his subjugating superiority over the animal, his very becoming-subject, his historicity, his emergence out of nature, his sociality, his access to knowledge and technics, all that, everything (in a nonfinite number of predicates) that is proper to man would derive from this originary fault, indeed, from this default in propriety—and from the imperative necessity that finds in it its development and resilience (45).

Positing an entry into becoming which effects itself upon the timelessness of the wild, whether that “wild” is called “enchanted innocence” or “true Nature,” thus reproduces this dominant schema. A schema which dissolves the vast diversity of nonhuman animals in a becoming-Nature which necessarily lacks both responsibility and respondability. An absolute senselessness, in other words, from which a line of flight is ontologically impossible. Despite the positing of a “pure animal Love” therefore, despite the potential for nonhuman animals to be gripped by a becoming “just as powerful as that of the human being with the animal,” the subjugating superiority of Man’s emergence from Nature, and hence humanist exceptionalism, is necessarily left unchallenged. Put simply, the apparent valorisation of the (wild) animal remains essentially within the neighbourhood of “the human.”

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<sup>92</sup> On Jacques Lacan and the notion of a nonhuman “lack of lack,” see Derrida “And Say the Animal Responded?” in *The Animal*, 119-140.

### **Shadow animals, zombie flesh: the economy of/and *mimēsis***

As a consequence of human contamination, as we have seen, the proper ways of being-dog have been, for Burroughs, displaced by a narcissistic imaging, rendered merely virtual according to Deleuze-Guattari, and disqualified as “unnatural” by deep ecologists. Dogs, therefore, in Noske’s telling phrase, are not, or are no longer, “the real thing.” In this, as I will argue in this section, they in fact all reiterate a logic of colonialism which serves to constitute subjugated beings who are precisely *deserving* of oppression—an oppressive logic which tends to contaminate any number of animals, both human and nonhuman.

This contamination is, in short, a displacement of nonhuman animals by and within human language, a tropological “touch” which renders nonsubstitutable beings mere simulacra. Indeed, Burroughs’ allusion to a supposedly “non-hideous” canine prior to the timely human “touch” exemplifies the “common sense” of a dominant anthropocentrism. One which inscribes both domesticated and instrumentalised animals within an economy of *mimēsis* both Platonic and Biblical. It is, moreover, this economy of tropes, acutely deemed the “other racism” by Noske, that will return us once more to the “vectors of power” and to their mutually articulating imbrication.

The reproduction of certain animals as “not real,” that is to say, as “pale imitations” of their idealised wild counterparts and/or forebears, is at once Christianised discourse and imperialist logic. Put simply, its economy of *mimēsis* ensures that colonised beings must become, as a result of their oppression, somehow dull and stupid and thus (albeit *ex post facto*), materially and economically deserving of being exploited and oppressed. It is according to this same tropology that the native zebus of Burroughs’ Libertatia come to be derided as “worthless” non-animals, shadowy ghosts unmarked but for their corruption by human proximity and by a putting to work which interrupts the timeless wild dioramas.

In this too we can understand the paradoxical *semi*-timelessness of Libertatia itself: responding to the timeless call of the wild, those revolutionary but necessarily time-bound settlers find only a coexistence of “*relative*” harmony not only with each other but also with “the ecosphere of flora and fauna.” They can find, in other words, only an imitation, a simulacrum, of the timeless wild. Coexisting *only to a degree*, the nonhuman animals who share the time of the settlers are but inferior copies, the poor

relations of those “wild” beings suspended in the Edenic dioramas of true Nature which can be observed—always following the Fall into the distance of *time*—only within The Museum of *Lost Species*.

One of the best examples of the dominant, “common sense” valorisation of the wild, one which makes explicit its Biblical heritage as well as marking a nexus of the entangled hegemonies of oppression being tracked here, is the first “chapter” of Julian Barnes’ novel *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (1989). Rewriting the story of Noah’s ark (*Genesis*, 6-9) from the perspectives of the various animals, “The Stowaway” is narrated by a woodworm who, by virtue of being both illegal and “unclean” (and thus all too obviously among the abject category of the foreign within the domestic), is fully aware of the futility of applying for asylum from Noah. The futility, that is, of asking Noah for hospitality, or of attempting to justify why he or she is “worth” saving—a request for hospitality from the human which thus crosses with the impossibility of salvation. While ostensibly seeking to refute the “clean” and “unclean” distinction imposed upon animals (*Genesis*, 7:2), it soon becomes clear, however, that the narration nevertheless remains complicit both with Noah and with God, and thus against certain “other” animals.

Initially, the woodworm-narrator, sexed being (his or her companions risk disclosure through their sexual activity) and illegal immigrant, seeks to reverse the traditional human-animal privilege. She or he does so, however, only on the condition, yet again, of every animal’s timeless dissolution. Man, s/he writes, “is a very unevolved species compared to the animals ... you are, as yet, at an early stage of your development. We, for instance, are *always ourselves*: that is what it means to be evolved” (28, emphasis added). Upon disembarkation, however, this absolute animal self-presence is contradicted in the reinscribing of another version of the clean-unclean distinction: that of the wild and the tame, of the effervescently exotic and the corrupt oppressed. Noah, the woodworm recalls, offered water and food during shortages to any animals willing to stay close to “New Noah’s Palace.” He offers them, that is to say, a place within the economic order: base reproduction of life in exchange for a plentiful supply of flesh. Noah, capitalist and colonial, offers, in short, mere day-to-day survival in exchange for the labour of their bodies, raising on their backs a profit for himself and his fellow colonials: his “people.” Precisely at this point the collective nonhuman animal “we” splits into an “us” and a “them.” To the astonishment of the woodworm,

some of *them*—not the cleverest ones, it has to be said—stayed around .... The pigs, the cattle, the sheep, some of the stupider goats, the chickens ... *We warned them* .... As I say, they weren't very bright, and were probably scared of going back into the wild; they'd grown dependent on their gaol, and their gaoler. What happened over the next few centuries was quite predictable: *they became shadows of their former selves* [and yet how can this be, given that such animals are “*always*” themselves, absolutely?]. The pigs and sheep you see walking around today are zombies compared to their effervescent [and yet “stupid”] ancestors on the Ark (26-7, emphasis added).

In the space of a few paragraphs, so-called “food” animals are thus transformed into ghosts, insubstantial shadows that are mere *copies* of their originary selves. In reiterating the Platonic logic of mimesis, these inferior, fallen copies thus lack the animating Idea, dead bodies as opposed to the living voice, and hence mutate into the pure animal remains of the “zombie.” Without *anima*, in short, pigs, “cattle,” sheep, goats, and chickens are reproduced as nothing but walking dead flesh.

In this way “food” animals cease to be living, vibrant beings, cease to be “the real thing.” Moreover, the spectral disembodiment through mimetic displacement thus paradoxically permits their transformation into “pure” corporeality, bodily-shaped collections of dead zombie flesh ready to be disarticulated into “meat.” In this way, the instrumentalised animal, the “walking ghost,” is the inverse of the living corpse that returns, that “revolutionary spirit” which, as we have seen in the discussion of Nietzsche and Marx, “out-lives” its actualisation in being raised (again) within contexts where it had not previously belonged. Hence, whereas the latter interrupts the hegemonies of oppression, stalling the machinery of animalisation, the Platonic devalorisation of the simulacrum in the former thus reproduces a symbolic logic of oppression which serves to constitute subjugated beings who are “in fact” *deserving* of oppression:<sup>93</sup>

The capitalist exploiter of the coloured workers ... consigns them to employments and treatments that [are] humanly degrading. *In order to justify this treatment the exploiters must argue that the workers are innately degraded and degenerate, consequently they naturally merit their*

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<sup>93</sup> It has been convincingly argued that the domestication of nonhuman animals results in a decrease of brain size which both inhibits new characteristics and favours pathological conditions. This is not, however, a justification for exploitation, not a cause, but only its *effect*. A shameful effect, moreover, which in fact argues *against* the intensive imposition of non-mutual domestication.

*condition*. ... This, then, is the beginning of modern race relations. It was not an abstract, immemorial feeling of mutual antipathy between groups, but rather a practical exploitative relationship with its socio-attitudinal facilitation (Nibert *Animal Rights/Human Rights*, 17; emphasis added).

We can thus more clearly understand Noske's contention that the devalorisation of instrumentalised animals, the unmarked "other" of the negative pole in the wild-tame dichotomy, constitutes the "other racism." Just as there is nothing "natural" about the capitalist exploitation of coloured workers, in the same way the antipathy towards instrumentalised, and thus commodified, nonhuman animals—and indeed, towards the foreign in the domestic—is nothing natural. Rather, it comes to be "naturalised" as a result of "a practical exploitative relationship with its [reproduced] socio-attitudinal facilitation." This entanglement of vectors of power can perhaps be seen operating most clearly in the contemporary slaughter factory, with its interrelated "devising and employing" of speciesism, race prejudice and sexual abuse for the pursuit of profit. For this reason, we shall return to these killing floors in the concluding chapter of this thesis.<sup>94</sup>

We are now in a position to distinguish between three different, mutually rearticulating machines of tropological displacement. First, there is the reductive reconfiguration of "other" humans *as* "animal" (active displacement to the status of animal); and second, the withdrawal of recognised human status (reactive displacement from the domain of reason). Both of these depend upon what I have called the theatrics of animalisation, that is, a displacing along an ontoteleological humanist dialectic. Finally, there is the displacement from living embodiment to inferior copy, which serves to retroactively naturalise both these processes of animalisation.<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, we can now see how the "clean" opposition of the wild and the tame serves to conceal its other others—the commodified and instrumentalised; the

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<sup>94</sup> The fate of the *culpeo* fox in Argentina serves as a good example of this production of antipathy for economic gain. For millenia, the culpeo had existed peaceably alongside humans, mainly because their fearlessness of humans meant they were of little interest to so-called "sports" hunters. However, around 1915, as Martin Wallen writes, "ranchers began to increase their flocks of sheep, at which time the *culpeo* ... suddenly came to be considered a pest. The Argentine situation exemplifies the way that commercial interests assign value—positive and negative—to animals" (*Fox*, 141-2).

<sup>95</sup> The same machinery of animalisation thus reduces a particularly situated nonhuman animal, such as a fox, to the category of subanimal (the foreign in the domestic), and as such refused even the minimum protection generally accorded to other "wild" animals. That a fox is categorised as "vermin," yet remains close to the "pet" category (as between a cat and a dog), is a major reason for its affective position.

slave; the illegal, potentially terroristic immigrant; the asylum seeker; the woman naturally deserving of domestication—, all contained within a silent space of fear and exploitation.<sup>96</sup> Nor is it difficult to perceive in this erasure the operation of economic interest.

This excluding entanglement of the animal, the woman and the slave circulates endlessly throughout the history of philosophy. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of the few writers to even consider nonhuman animals, insists for example in his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* that, in “becoming domesticated, [man] ... grows weak, timid, and servile; his *effeminate* way of life totally enervates his strength and courage.”<sup>97</sup> This linking together of the domesticated, the servile, and the feminine which, in their mutual articulation, constitutes a threat to manly virtues which must thus be constrained and excluded so as to avoid contamination, is far from incidental. Crossing too with this articulation of domesticity, women, and reproduction, the forced penetration and reproduction of female animals through which originary patriarchy reproduces only itself recalls us of course to the *khōra* of both Plato and Irigaray.

Indeed, it is here that the timeless enchantment of Burroughs’ animal harmony overlaps most significantly with the discourses of both Deleuze-Guattari and Deep Ecology. The idealising of the naturally wild, unconstrained by time and uncontaminated by feminine domestication, accords, as Karen Davis writes, “with the ‘masculine’ spirit of adventure and conquest” which in the West looks down on those beings constituted as “unnatural, tame, and confined.” In this, Davis continues, the “analogy between women and nonhuman animals overlooks perhaps a more specifically crucial comparison between women and farm animals” (“Thinking Like a Chicken,” 193). One thinks most obviously here of reproductive rights, or the curtailing thereof by means of forced conception, be it by physical force—rape in whatever form or species—or by way of the prohibition of contraception and/or abortion.

On one side of the human-animal border therefore, the domesticated, the instrumentalised, and the foreign within the domestic, contaminated by *patriarchal* time, all cease to be nonsubstituable living beings, becoming instead *masculine*

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<sup>96</sup> In another direction, upon this same dichotomy is constructed the contrary yet complimentary discourse which constitutes pets as more intelligent and responsive as a *result* of their domestication-interaction, that is, their anthropomorphic contamination, whereby their feral kin are once again configured in opposition to the valorised category, that is, as *untameable* vermin, such dirty scavengers thus becoming “deserving” of extermination.

<sup>97</sup> “*The Social Contract*” and “*Discourses*” trans. Cole, Brumfitt, & Hall (London: Everyman’s Library, 1973), 57; emphasis added.



*artefacts*, the property of man who thus represents the power of reason. On the other side, contaminated by *human* time, the domesticated, the instrumentalised, and the foreign within the domestic all cease to be nonsubstituable living beings, becoming instead *human artefacts*, the property of man who thus holds the power of life *over* death. Artefactual animals being, in other words, already on the side of death, always living a death which is, in a double sense, a living death: both as living artefacts and as living beings whose existence has been stripped of everything but that which is useful to the profitable reproduction of death and of dead zombie flesh.

Furthermore, it is impossible to conceive of this unmarked displacement of other others from the *nonhuman* wild-tame dichotomy without understanding its coextensivity with other vectors of power. Once again, Karen Davis is helpful here. “Not only men,” she writes, “but women and animal protectionists exhibit a culturally conditioned indifference toward, and prejudice against, creatures whose lives appear too slavishly, too boringly, too stupidly female, too ‘cowlike’” (196-7). It is this entanglement of difference which gives us one way of understanding that which Derrida has famously termed “carnophallogocentrism.”<sup>98</sup> Within its network of inculcation, the gendering of singular nonhuman animals is thus of the greatest importance, in every sense.

Returning to Burroughs, and in particular to those hated dogs and abject centipedes, we are now better placed to hear that which is left unsaid. Referring to “ugly” and yet faceless snarl of the dog, it is not merely by chance that Burroughs describes it as “a redneck lynch-mob Paki-basher snarl ... snarl of someone got a “Kill a Queer for Christ” sticker on his heap, a self-righteous occupied snarl” (*Cat Inside*, 63). The “worst of the worst” is, for Burroughs, a murderous hate which excludes closeness, thus preventing an unconditional relation to another. Hatred is, in other words, that which prohibits the potential “animal contact” which gives of itself a Love beyond all conflict and pain. Hatred prohibits, in short, the giving of one’s self in unconditional hospitality. However, it is precisely this murderous hate which returns, devastating Burroughs’ discourse from within, in the affirmation of only *some* nonhuman animals. In an echo of “Kill a Queer for Christ,” in a late diary entry Burroughs writes:

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<sup>98</sup> See “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject” in *Points ... Interviews, 1974-1994*, 255-87.

March 18, 19, 1997. Wednesday. They say only love can create, so who the fuck could love up a centipede? He's got more love in him than I got. Now, killing a centipede makes me feel safer—like, one less (*Last Words*, 126)

The spectres of speciesism, sexism, and racism, in being mutually rearticulated in the valorisation of a timeless wild nature, here come to mark Burroughs' own "lynch-mob rage" in its echo of the racist, misogynistic and homophobic exclusion of closeness which manifests itself in hate speech such as "kill a queer for Christ" or "killing a queer makes me feel safer, like one less." While for Burroughs those "worst of the worst," figured by a "lynch-mob" of faceless dogs, are the queer killers, the neutralisers of those who denaturalise sexuality, who are foreign to heterosexual patriarchal domesticity, Burroughs himself nevertheless "feels safer" killing those other "others" who are foreign in and to the domestic, those queer centipedes who denaturalise the proper place of the human.<sup>99</sup>

To summarise then, the apparent valorisation of the (wild) animal nevertheless remains essentially within the neighbourhood and the spectacle—the mirror—of "the human." Such is the high-walled enclave patrolled by the convulsively negating Guardians with which this chapter opened, safeguarded by immigration police and "pest"-controllers tasked with defending the indivisibility of the border and of the impossibility and impassability of the Interzone. In this sense, "immigration police" and "pest-controllers," in seeking to conserve an imaginary space of order by displacing "Others," can be considered metaphors of each other, mutually rearticulating an inviolable property and propriety constructed upon the refusal of hospitality. The "proper" of the human, in other words, depends upon the exclusion both of the already "domesticated" and of the foreigner within, depends upon withholding the offer of hospitality to all those who share our space and take our time but who are not "us." This obviously has serious implications for a thinking ethics which, insofar "it has to

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<sup>99</sup> Centipedes in fact offer a particular challenge both to the naturalisation of heterosexuality and to the fixity of heterosexual reproduction. Arthropods (*phylum Arthropoda*), and thus kin to cockroaches and scorpions, there exist an estimated 8000 species of centipedes. Some species live up to six years, with periods of gestation and infancy varying widely from species to species. Most species lay eggs, but some give birth to living young, and some nurse both their eggs and the young centipedes to maturity. While usually the males produce a spermatophore for the female to take up, some centipede groups are, however, all female, with reproduction by parthenogenesis. Finally, some species of *Scolopendromorpha* are matrophagic (the offspring consume their mother). In this context, see also Rosi Braidotti's work on insect figurations within a feminist thinking of sexual difference in *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (2002).

do with the *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling ... *ethics is hospitality*" (Derrida "On Cosmopolitanism," 16-17). Ethics, in short, concerns the giving of hospitality to those who exist within the home and yet are nonetheless excluded from it.

### **Conclusion: denaturalising "the human"**

In 1990, a biography of William S. Burroughs by Ted Morgan was published, entitled *Literary Outlaw*. Burroughs, however, would later complain about the title, saying that he could not be inscribed within the opposition presupposed by "outlaw" because of the fact that he had never been "within" the law. What philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Judith Butler, among others, have made clear, however, is that this is simply not a choice. "I," insofar as I *am*, is constituted within or, rather, *before* the law. It is a law, moreover, which gives us to understand that animal encounters are not the privilege, the proper, of the human, but rather the *denaturalisation* of "human," and this is precisely its *risk*—the risk of Elizabeth Costello, of Venus Xtravaganza, and indeed, of William S. Burroughs.

There can be no timeless dioramas of nonhuman becoming, no utopian dreams of a harmonious pre- or posthuman wilderness, an animal encounter is always and only that which calls itself forth in dangerous conflict with the hegemonic identifications of a given social state of affairs of whatever species. As for "the human," such encounters are a "becoming animal" or a "becoming mad" only in the sense of coming to be unrecognisably (post)human, only in the risk of being excluded *as* "animal" and/or *as* "mad." That which Burroughs names "Love" is not the capitalised *end* of conflict but rather its beginning and its return, a beginning ever again. It is to hold one's "self" exposed in and as the place without place: the space of invention.

It has been argued throughout these last two chapters that the construction of speciesism—with "species" (and here I am re-employing Judith Butler's formulation) understood in part as a production of the history of speciesism—is indissociable from racism, sexism, homophobia, animalisation, and so forth. There are indeed, as Butler writes, "quite pressing and significant historical reasons for asking how and where we might read not only their convergence, but the sites at which the one cannot be constituted save through the other" (*Bodies that Matter*, 168). At the same time,

however, this is *not* to reduce the irreducible differences between them. It is *not*, in other words, to suggest a biological continuism, which, along with the equally unacceptable option of metaphysical discontinuity, I attempted to put out of the question over the course of the first two parts of this thesis.

One major difference is that, in contrast to those human animals marginalised or “animalised” by way of patriarchal and ethnocentric discourse, whether capitalist or fundamentalist (and if indeed these can in fact be separated), it is unlikely that many, or perhaps even any, of those billions of other beings condemned to the abjected category of “the animal” seek to identify themselves with the phantasmatic ideals of *human* hegemonic norms. This is not to say, of course, that there is no nonhuman identification with *nonhuman* phantasmatic norms within given social communities. Again, this is a question of habituation, of domestication, and thus of the chance and the necessity of singular encounters, of risky transformations from which nonhuman be-ings cannot therefore be excluded. However, as regards what I am calling the animal encounter at and as the limit of “the human,” one question still remains: what’s in it for nonhuman animals? What potential benefit, in other words, accrues to “actual” other animals in terms of the strategy being outlined here?

To answer this question it is necessary to recall that, in effect, the inaugural citation of an improper phrasing, the ethical opening of the political space of invention, is always and indissociably doubled. In interrupting the devalorisation of “other humans,” its crossing necessarily interrupts the devalorisation of “other” animals. The phrasing called forth by an animal encounter, that is, must at once interrupt the unthinking instrumentalising relation *to* animals. In other words, an im-possible disidentification with the radical alterity of *nonhuman* or *inhuman* being—the necessarily chance demand of the foreign in the domestic, of the improper in the proper—calls forth a bodied phrasing which, in marking and thus interrupting the measure and the limit of humanity, necessarily displaces “*animals*” from within the “abject” category. Hence, the denaturalisation of hegemonic human norms at once denaturalises the metaphysical human-animal discontinuity and its attendant hierarchy.

## 7. Burroughs and the Untimely Posthuman Animal: Beginnings or Ends of Ethics?

What challenge does that excluded and abjected realm produce to a symbolic hegemony that might force a radical rearticulation of what qualifies as bodies that matter, ways of living that count as “life,” lives worth protecting, lives worth saving, lives worth grieving?

Judith Butler *Bodies that Matter*

### Introduction: displacing the fairytale

The beginning of ethics, I suggest in the previous chapter, demands, in some way, the giving of hospitality to all those who share our space and take our time but who are not “us.” One must, in other words, begin by being able to respond to those excluded within the domestic. Following from this, and by way of the promised return visit to the Museum of Lost Species, I will further argue in this chapter that the ethical beginning in fact resides within the detested figure of the Burroughsian centipede. Ethics, in short, begins with being-*with* the being-*there* of such monstrosities. Such is a way of being which, as we shall see, moves Burroughs’ posthuman beyond its masculinist liberal-Aristotelian logic and towards a more generous notion of “community.” Such a community, we discover, is united not by an exclusive contract, but rather by the fact that *every* living being demands unconditional hospitality from every *other*, and yet is simultaneously incapable of giving it. Moreover, I will argue, it is only upon such a basis that the improper cat-human creature of Burroughs’ dreams becomes possible, bringing with it the chance of being together beyond the human.

For Burroughs, as we have seen, the advent of language displaces the human animal, contemporaneous with its coming, outside of nature. A divided being therefore, the human thus comes to its “self” as an outsider within time:

Man sold his soul for time, language, tools, weapons, and dominance. And to make sure he doesn’t get out of line, these invaders keep an occupying garrison in his nondominant brain hemisphere. ... A rift is built into the human organism, the rift or cleft between the two hemispheres (*Ghost of Chance*, 48)

This “cleft,” this caesura which ensures human distance even as it corrupts every nonhuman being it touches, is thus built right into the human brain, a physiological

abyss which, in separating left from right, thus divides human from animal. With this properly human “rift,” this linguistic displacement marked by an alienating, inalienable temporality, the Madagascan creation myth is thus rewritten as a metaphor of the Origin of the human species. Its majestic island birth, launched with fireworks, thus becomes an allegorical fable, a fable of a fable of an originary division:

I draw a parallel between this rift separating the two sides of the human body and the rift that divided Madagascar from the mainland of Africa. One side of the rift drifted into enchanted timeless innocence. The other moved inexorably toward language, time, tool use, weapon use, war, exploitation, and slavery (49).

The violent rupture which isolates Madagascar thus allegorises the Origin of Man, offering itself as a mythic representation of the rift in the human brain, of the Epimethean fault which is the appearing of *language* and of technics in general. At the same time, in that time is not yet, this arriving of the human can be the result of neither a spatial (geophysical) nor a temporal (evolutionary) shift, but rather only and always again the alien-divine lightning bolt that is the invasion of what Burroughs calls the “word virus.”

With the imposing of time by language which launches the human, the innocent plenitude of its prosimian prehistory is torn away, leaving in its wake a gaping wound at the core of the human. To be wounded by this rift *is* to be human, and thus to be removed from the timeless Eden of interspecies harmony. In this, and along with the nonhumans who “go along” (in the Heideggerian sense) with them, humans too are similarly the victim of its dominance, its enslaving exploitation. The abyssal border is, in short, the “split between the wild, the timeless, the free, and the tame, the time-bound, the tethered, like the tethered goose that will forever resent its bondage” (*Ghost of Chance*, 13).

The central point, however, is that for Burroughs the archaic animal that is Madagascar, moored in enchanted calm for millions of years, nonetheless remains secreted within the human as its “other” hemisphere. The impassability and thus impartibility of its border guarded, dominated, by the inhuman—and yet properly human—machinery of linguistic domination. One reading of this passage, therefore, founds the origin of the human upon the death or the ceasing to exist of the animal (a cessation which is at once the enslavement and extinction of animals). Such a reading thus reiterates one of the two dominant—and by now very familiar—versions of the

humanist dialectical teleology. Coincidental with this reading, however, is one in which the sanctuary of the Lemur People coexists outside-within “us,” repressed but retaining its inevitable trace of repression and thus the possibility of thinking differently, that is, of existing outside of sequence and causality.

Irrespective of this potential, these two sides—the nondominated (and thus nondominating) freedom of the wild as opposed to the dominated (and thus dominating) enslavement of the tame—must remain discontinuous by virtue the impassable and impartible caesura that is language’s taking place. Hence, it follows that, for Burroughs “any attempt at synthesis must remain unrealizable in *human* terms” (48, emphasis added). Insofar as “merging the two is not viable,” he continues, one is indeed “tempted to say, as Brion Gysin did, ‘*Rub out the word*’” (49). Confronted, in other words, with the *a priori* impossibility of negating the negation, Burroughs is *tempted* to affirm the possibility of a simple reversal, of a return that is a human turn to a “wordless world”: “What would a wordless world be like? As Korzybski said: ‘I don’t know. Let’s see’” (50). This is indeed a temptation, a utopian desire: a posthuman version of the homosexual utopia roamed by “packs of wild boys.”<sup>100</sup>

Such a romantic, fairytale reversal, predicated upon the traditional metaphysical distinction between eternal nature and human culture, offers little, as we have seen, to a thinking of ethics, remaining as it does within the very dichotomy it seeks to undermine. It is a temptation, however, which Burroughs ultimately refuses, insisting in his final journal that the “promised land” of utopian figures is “bullshit” (*Last Words*, 112). Instead, Burroughs attempts to refine and clarify Gysin’s lure, and in so doing a possible opening to the ethical indeed begins to emerge. An opening which, it will be argued, reconnects both with the cut-up as originally delineated by Gysin and, moreover, with notions of “animal contact” and “pure Love” from which the centipede not only cannot be excluded, but who in fact stages the beginning of an impossible, unavowable community.

Burroughs is tempted, as we have seen, to suggest that we “rub out” the word, but that—“perhaps”—would be a mistake:

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<sup>100</sup> On this, see William S. Burroughs *Wild Boys: A Book of the Dead* (1971), especially the languidly beautiful chapters “The Wild Boys” and “The Wild Boys Smile.”

perhaps “rub” is the wrong word. The formula is quite simple: reverse the magnetic field so that, instead of being welded together, the two halves repel each other like opposing magnets. This could be a road to final liberation, as it were, a final solution to the language problem, from which all human “problems” stem (*Ghost of Chance*, 49-50)

Rejecting the utopian erasure of the trace which would be to become One with the timelessness of eternity, Burroughs thus suggests instead a further forcing open of the division. A radical displacement, that is to say, of the human-animal discontinuity. It is only this, I argue, which permits, with all its attendant risk, the denaturalisation of the phantasmatic constitution of “humanness.” The denaturalising, in other words, of the very arriving of the human.

Rather than the simple reversal of a “rubbing out,” we thus find instead the reversal of force and at once the displacement or a distancing from *inhabitation*, that is, from our inhabitation within the habitual domination of language in its broadest sense. Or, put another way, *revaluation* and *rearticulation*. It is in this sense a movement beyond the properly human, a movement which reiterates exactly that which Judith Butler describes as a “crossing.” Always a forced distancing from inhabitation, such a “crossing,” writes Butler, necessarily goes by way of repetition “in directions that reverse and displace the originating aims” (*Bodies that Matter*, 123). Such a reversal-displacement of speciesism, however, is never a one-time only “final solution” (a phrase which, in this context, attempts just this movement which, as such, must never, ever be “final”). Rather, in this coincident double operation of reversal-displacement which is at once the gesture of deconstruction, the “gap between the two operations must remain open, must let itself be ceaselessly marked and remarked” (Derrida “Outwork,” 6).

It is here that we must make the promised return visit to “The Museum of Lost Species,” wherein one might lovingly contact a living corpse rather than merely reproduce the walking dead. As we have seen, its timeless dioramic exhibits may be observed only from within the distance of time. This distance, this divisive temporality, is precisely the iterability of language which imposes itself upon the so-called harmony of the wild. Always already opening the space of conflict and pain, it is that which not even the saving and salving power of animal Love can thus overcome. Instead, it demands a forced displacement of the displaced, the call of the atemporality of being as



such calling into being a placeholder which marks and thus holds open the interval between the no longer and the not yet.

The Museum of Lost Species is not exactly a museum, since all of the species are alive in dioramas of their natural habitats. Admission is free to anyone who can enter. The coinage here is the ability to endure the pain and sadness of observing extinction and by so doing to reanimate the species by observing it (Burroughs *Ghost of Chance*, 51).

Paradoxically then, these living artefacts are no longer and at once not yet. They retain, that is to say, the potential to be “reanimated” by the regard of anyone who *can* share their space—indicating that this is not a choice, but rather the chance and necessity of being-there—, by an “observing” which rather constitutes “contact.” This *mourning*, which reverses in displacing the destructive touch of time, thus re-members those “others” whom language has annihilated, rendered partial and finite. The “coinage” which must be paid by such contact—contact which reanimates or enlivens a corpse, creates or invents a posthumous monstrosity which thus out-lives its type and genus—is the *ability* to endure an exposure to “the pain and sadness of observing extinction.”

Here then, Burroughs points to the essential link between the animal encounter and finitude, of an encounter at and as the limit which, no longer and not yet, is the condition which interrupts *all* life by which life out-lives itself. Indeed, it is always the finitude, that is, the nonsubstitutability, of every “other” which must always come again to interrupt a “deadly, pervasive ignorance” (*Cat Inside*, 46). Cats, affirms Burroughs, “are living, breathing creatures, and when any other being is contacted, it is sad: because you see the limitations, the pain and fear and the final death” (70). However, given that in and as such an encounter the “I” which comes to be must have the ability to endure the anxiety at and as the limit, we must thus recall too the risk that is the potential *inability* to endure such an exposing, as experienced by Elizabeth Costello. In short, to reverse the destruction of life, to displace the commodification of zombie flesh which marks both the arrival and the way of being human, one must cease being human in being exposed in and to our shared finitude.

## Stammering hospitality

The aim of the infamous textual experiments christened “cut-ups” was to escape the domination of language, and thus to chance upon an animal contact exceeding the constraints of sequence and causality or, more precisely, exceeding the historically contingent horizon of the possible. Premised upon a random chopping up and placing alongside of generically heterogeneous texts, Burroughs describes it is a movement which, in cutting into the present, allows the future to leak out, thus interrupting the control mechanism ensuring the apparent “transparency” of language. An inaugurating moment or movement, in short, which in its taking place at once escapes in opening itself to an unforeseeable other.

Composed as they are through the disjunctive repetition of random fragments and obsessive phrases, Burroughs’ texts thus explicitly oppose a certain closure of meaning attempted by traditional narrative to an unrelenting stammer that discloses the emptiness of all such attempts. From the “cut-ups” through to the chance dislocations that mark his final diary entries, Burroughs’ entire project constitutes, in other words, an unceasing attempt to open language to an improper phrasing. One which, displacing as well as reversing the killing ideals of race, gender and species, could not be predicted from within what Foucault calls the “regime of truth.” An opening, in short, which interrupts the oppression of habit in calling forth that which remains to come.

This way of working language, of working it over, doubling and redoubling it, is a way of working which Gilles Deleuze locates in both Heidegger and Alfred Jarry, making them both “unrecognised precursors” of Burroughs even as the “wildness” of Burroughs’ writing machine forms a rhizomatic connection with that of Deleuze.

[Heidegger and Jarry] work in principle with two languages, activating a dead language within a living language [hence a dead phrasing outlives itself in being posthumously reanimated within a context it had not previously belonged], in such a way that the living language is transformed and transmuted. ... The affect (*A*) produces in the current language (*B*) a kind of foot stomping, a stammering, an obsessional tom-tom, like a repetition that never ceases to create something new (*C*). Under the impulse of the affect, our language is set whirling, and in whirling it forms a language of the future, as if it were a foreign language, an eternal reiteration, but one that leaps and jumps. (“An Unrecognised Precursor,” 98).

While the contrast between “dead” and “living” languages in Burroughs is not the literal contrast to which Deleuze refers (which, in the case of Heidegger for example, is that relation of ancient Greek and modern German which reserves for Germany its privileged destiny), it is nevertheless this interval which marks the stammer of an inaugural citation as foreign to a given state of affairs, as a “living corpse.” This is neither a human-animal, left-right synthesis, not a merging of the two, nor is it a rubbing out of the word, the impossible erasure of language which is precisely to cross out the crossing. Rather, this posthumous monstrosity—a felinthropos to come, as we shall see—potentially disclosed by this stomping, stammering repetition is that which outlives every determinable form and thus outlives the human. Only in this way, I argue, is it possible to think of “posthuman contact.”

Nevertheless, in the relentless stutter of his texts, Burroughs in fact attempts to *force*, even to *mime*, the chance and necessity of an animal encounter. As we have seen, however, the risk of reiteration carries a double risk: not only the risk of becoming unrecognisable, but also the risk of reiterating precisely those hegemonies of oppression such a miming seeks to destroy. As Butler writes,

precisely because such terms have been produced and constrained within such regimes, they ought to be repeated in directions that reverse and displace their originating aims. One does not stand at an instrumental distance from the terms by which one experiences violation. Occupied by such terms and yet occupying them oneself risks a complicity, a repetition, a relapse into injury, but it is also the occasion to work the mobilising power of injury ... to acknowledge the force of repetition as the very condition of an affirmative response to violation (*Bodies that Matter*, 123-4).

In fact, as we have seen with Nietzsche, the necessary movement of parody inheres in every repetition, making every affirmative posthumous phrasing always already a “mime,” a walking ghost complicit with the hegemonies of oppression. By contrast, Elizabeth Costello, to return to our earlier example, in simply reversing the traditional mind-body distinction throughout her lecture, thus maintains complicit with that very distinction. However, even with the double movement of reversal-displacement this double risk is unavoidable, and is thus never a “risk” in the sense of a possibility. Rather the chance *is* the risk of becoming unrecognisable and at once of becoming complicit.

Here then, we can better understand that the imperative of an animal encounter, its revolutionary spirit, is preserved only insofar as it reserves the impossibility that is its insensibility. Only, in other words, insofar as it withdraws in and as the material thickness of its improper costume, of its obscurity in no longer and not yet making sense. For Burroughs, however, to seek the animal outliving of the human whilst at once placing conditions upon openness, that is, whilst refusing hospitality to certain “other” animals, is a sovereign gesture fully complicitous with the injury of enslavement. It reduces, in other words, the other to the same, to the recognisable, thus prohibiting a possible encounter insofar as it repeats the structural exclusion.

Sovereignty, as Derrida teaches us, if it is indeed sovereign, presupposes an indivisible power, and thus a violent exclusion of others. Hospitality, therefore, is incommensurable with sovereignty, with impassability, insofar as unconditional hospitality is the impossibility of the private and the autonomous, the sovereign, of the decision or law based on property. The *act* of hospitality, however, nevertheless presupposes a sovereign decision, that is, an autonomy which permits the decision to open one’s self or one’s home. The host, in other words, must “freely” choose to open herself to the other, a decision which therefore cannot be an obligation, neither convention nor duty. It cannot, in short, be *habitual*. Paradoxically then, there can be no hospitality, as Derrida says, “without sovereignty of oneself over one’s home, but since there is also no hospitality without finitude, sovereignty can only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence” (*Of Hospitality*, 55). Hospitality therefore, if it is indeed hospitable, *must* be unconditional, it cannot impose conditions upon the “who” or “what” which comes, cannot impose limits upon the granting of asylum. Its opening, that is, cannot be determined by the “already there,” cannot be predicted from within a given state of affairs. Hospitality is, in a word, *impossible*. It can neither be expected nor prepared for, and hence the “I” is constitutively—and always habitually—unprepared for the (be)coming of the other, structurally incapable therefore, of the sovereign decision hospitality otherwise demands of it. Hospitality as such is thus *posthumous*.

In this, hospitality is intimately related to what I am calling the animal encounter, as we can hear in Derrida’s description of the “taking place” of hospitality as that in which “the impossible becomes possible but *as impossible*. The impossible, for me, for an “I,” for what is “my own” or is properly my own in general” (“Hostipitality,” 387). The example “*par excellence*,” according to Derrida, is the

“visitation” of Yahweh to Abraham that is at once an “announcement,” an example which similarly exemplifies the animal encounter: “This is indeed hospitality *par excellence* in which the visitor radically overwhelms the self of the ‘visited’ and the *chez-soi* [the “one’s-home” or “house” but also the “with-self”] of the hôte” (372).

Moreover, given the originary technicity of all living being that is the *trace*, the constitutive unpreparedness, the chance and necessity of being “radically overwhelmed” by an other, is, as we have already seen, a “fault” necessarily shared across each and every living being. At the same time, it is this same shared “fault,” this originary division or *différance*, which ensures that every such being “is” at once irreplaceably singular (“being-the-there”) *and* always already disposed outside of its self. “We” are all, in short, foreign to the properly “at-home,” dispossessed, exiled from the domestic by the already-there which already prohibits the sovereign decision. *Every living being therefore, is obliged by the machineries of being to forever seek asylum within the domestic, whilst always remaining, in its singularity, irredeemably foreign to the “there” of being.*

In a single phrase then—a phrasing at once an echo and a synonym of Rancière’s “We are all German Jews”—*we are all asylum seekers*. What this means, therefore, is that every living being demands hospitality and, insofar as hospitality demands a sovereign decision, every living being is constitutively incapable of offering it. Or rather, we are all able to do so always and only inadequately, always insufficiently. It is a capacity, in other words, *only insofar* as it is always already an *incapacity*.

This is, however, by no means to reduce the singular suffering of “actual,” historically contingent, asylum seekers. Rather, it discloses instead that the hatred of the foreign is precisely a hatred of the other that I am (and that I follow), a suicidal self-hatred of what is “not itself” which is, as Nietzsche writes, “of the essence of *ressentiment*” (*Genealogy*, I:10).<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, the liberal-Aristotelian contractual argument, which Rosi Braidotti describes as practically “the trademark of liberal individualism and its idea of moral responsibility” (*Transpositions*, 111), is rendered both unjust and unjustifiable. According to this contractual argument, nonhuman

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<sup>101</sup> It would be interesting here, if only time and space permitted, to explore Nietzsche’s thinking (in section 11 of the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*) of the “wildness” of the enslaved men of *ressentiment* who, “once they go outside, where the strange, the *stranger* is found, they are not much better than uncaged beasts of prey.”

animals must be excluded from the ethical domain on the basis that, as they cannot offer hospitality, they are therefore not entitled to receive any in return. However, we discover instead that *every* living being demands unconditional hospitality from every *other*, and yet is simultaneously incapable of giving it.<sup>102</sup>

Such is the reciprocity which paradoxically is the very condition of hospitality, and thus of ethics. Human animals can offer neither humans nor nonhumans hospitality, just as nonhuman animals can offer hospitality neither to nonhumans nor to humans—no one animal, in short, can offer hospitality to an other. This is, in other words, the condition of finitude, that of the doubled abyss—the repeatability of language and the singularity of being-there—which divides and shares each singular and nonsubstitutable living being from, and with, every other.

In his arthropodic *ressentiment*, Burroughs is thus attempting, in sovereign fashion, to exclude the utterly other, the illegal occupier, on the basis of a double evolutionary fault (and a doubly *teleological* fault, therefore, a lack of evolution that is, as the most unbearably ancient, at once an excess of time). He reinscribes, that is to say, the ontological division of the “repugnant ledge” which serves to attribute a mute bestiality to the centipede. As we have seen, however, the constitutive technicity of the already-there demands the affirmation of encountering an other whose language we do *not* recognise while, in exactly the same movement, language ceases to be the privileged site from which one can, in just such a sovereign fashion, exclude the Other on the basis of lack.

Such an attribution of mute bestiality, in other words, is a mime which serves to reproduce everyday domination. By contrast, the animal encounter is that which displaces and disposes the possibility of just such a sovereign “I.” Moreover, it is only here that we can better recognise the *temptation* of an attempted “rubbing out” of language, in that its temptation is precisely that of the *mime*. The security and simplicity of mere reversal is, in other words, the walking ghost of a conservative illusion of sovereignty, an inverted Platonism which serves only to cross out the revolutionary rupture. Never an erasure, the interruption is rather a caesura *within*

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<sup>102</sup> This entire part could in fact be considered as a critique of Aristotle’s position in the *Politics* in which he argues that “it is the sharing of a common view in these matters [of morality] that makes a household [*oikia*] or a city [*polis*]” (*Politics*, I:2). Common-sense morality is thus, for Aristotle, the condition of community, its conservation of the Same being the very test which *a priori* excludes the foreigner. For a related critique, see also Cary Wolfe *Animal Rites: American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 107-109.

language in its broadest sense. There is, therefore, no language for the encounter, the maddening event, but only the *stutter* or the *stammer* that is improper metonymy, the burring, clamorous silence of a phrasing which tears a hole in the sovereignty of sense.

As we have seen then, sovereignty and hospitality are incommensurable and yet indissociable, an aporia marked by the “is”—the coming to being—of the “I is other” that is never willed, never a choice. By contrast, the sovereign decision presupposed by the positing of the wild-tame dichotomy—its sovereignty displayed in the contempt expressed for the victims of the gesture—is in fact the denial of hospitality, and thus the closure of the ethical. Ethics being, as Derrida writes, “a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners” (“On Cosmopolitanism,” 16-17).

Here then, insofar as ethics is a question of the foreigner, and thus of the foreign in the domestic, ethics can therefore be considered first of all a question of the *centipede*: a question of that which, since always, since before time, illegally occupies our space and thus makes demands on “our” time. Unconditional hospitality demands that we not impose conditions, that we not risk indebting the other, nor indeed can we ask anything of the other, not even, or especially not, “who?” or “what?” of this other who is already there within our most private of properties. And yet, insofar as ethics is hospitality, the ethical is always inadequate, a demand *and* an incapacity from which the nonhuman animal *hôte*—guest, host and enemy—cannot be excluded. Again, we must return to Derrida, and specifically to that which he describes as a “principle of ethics or more radically of justice, in the most difficult sense” and which “is perhaps the obligation that engages my responsibility with respect to the most dissimilar [*le plus dissemblable*, the least “fellow”-like], the entirely other, precisely, the monstrously other, the unrecognisable other” (*Beast*, 108).

### **As yet unimaginable**

This notion of being exposed at home to the hospitality of the centipede brings us in the end, in the beginning, to the porosity and infolding of Louise Bourgeois’s *Spider* (1997).



Louise Bourgeois, *Spider*, 1997, steel and mixed media



Encaged within the steel legs of the spider and further enclosed within a mesh cage, the seat, the space, of the human is thus sheltered and threatened twice over, at once protected and imprisoned by both the “industrial” and the “natural.” Here then, the place of the human is striated by the fear, the power and the security of becoming-with the nonhuman—whether “animal” or “technological.” Interesting for us here, is that according to Bourgeois the artwork carries “a set of maternal associations of a wholly positive kind, drawing on autobiographical references to connote shelter and protection” (Baker *The Postmodern Animal*, 80). Nonetheless, it remains, as Steve Baker points out, “undeniably open to being read entirely differently” (80). The question then, is a question of reading and of hospitality. Indeed, this is always the question of reading, and in particular of the undecidable interval between maternal shelter and the matrophagy of the other who already surrounds us, an unrecognisable other “who,” as an unpassable frontier, imprisons us and is imprisoned within our own property and at once breaks down the fences.

It is within this absolute proximity of the most distant that Anne Dufourmantelle locates the urgent demand of hospitality, describing it as an imperative—

drawing the contours of an impossible, illicit geography of proximity. A proximity that would not be the opposite of an elsewhere come from outside and surrounding it, but “close to the close,” that unbearable orb of intimacy that melts into hate. If we can say that murder and hate designate everything that excludes closeness, it is insofar as they ravage from within an original relationship to alterity (“Invitation,” 2-4).

Insofar as ethics begins where the familiar and the familial ends, we can now understand the urgency of an impossible hospitality, of a sharing of exile in which asylum is already offered to every other and which is always insufficient. In contrast to the self-hating hierarchy of the Same which organises every properly human ethics according to distance and closeness, an ethics of the spider, of the unbearably ancient centipede, calls us instead to the apocalyptic untimely encounter. The other, foreign to the domestic, always comes first.

Never a test which shatters love, it is rather, as we saw with Nietzsche, the active forgetting of invention itself: an event the call of which shatters the mirror and at once the psyche. It is to step before and beyond one’s self, a taking and a giving of place before any possibility of love and thus beyond the narcissism which limits love

to one's fellow. Never a calculation, passing through the idiocy of bodyings demands only a response and a responsibility to its call—a demand which can, potentially fatally, always outstrip and be outstripped. The centipede, in short, sets the stage for an ethics of the unrecognisable other in which “the human” comes to being subversively rearticulated.

Finally, we return, once again differently, to the hospitality offered to William S. Burroughs by his feline companions and, in particular, to that encounter which, on August 9<sup>th</sup> 1984, Burroughs claims saved him from a deadly, pervasive ignorance. Here, we discover that, insofar as it takes place across a zone of indecipherable and undecidable sense, such a life-affirming and enlightening contact is necessarily a relation without relation, one which marks instead only the abyssal distance of finitude:

*Meeeowww*. “Hello, Bill.”

The distance from there to here is the measure of what I have learned from cats (*Cat Inside*, 90).

This distance from there to here, from “I” to other, “is” (and is not) the caesura of pure potentiality. For Burroughs, moreover, it is the possibility of creating “a creature that is part cat, part human, and part something as yet unimaginable, which might result from a union that has not taken place for millions of years” (*Cat Inside*, 3). This “as yet unimaginable” is a *phrasing* holding the place of an unheard-of becoming, of an *animal encounter* in which being exposed comes to be other in being disposed together. The coming of the unimagined and unimaginable other, however, demands an unconditional, centipedal hospitality ultimately refused by Burroughs. Only then, however, does the refusal of abjection become possible and, unhinging the teleology of humanism, with it comes the spacing of a community beyond the human.

## Part Four: Community

### Introduction

In this part, I will explore in detail the notion of a “community beyond the human,” alluded to at the end of the last chapter. To begin with, however, it will be necessary to consider the constitution of “the human community” it purports to move beyond, which I will do through a reading of Carl Schmitt’s *The Concept of the Political*. Such a community, it might be suggested, is simply the totality of common humanity, the kinship of the whole of the human species. However, as we have seen, the question of “who,” “what,” or “which” counts as the properly human remains always open to negotiation, always again demanding the reproduction and thus the re-closure of its borders. As a result, the question must therefore turn to the *functioning* of this circumscription of a “common” or “universal” humanity—of its economy and its essential propriety which throughout history, on both the left and the right, is reiterated in the guise of a positive and privileged concept. It is this concept which will be taken up in the first half of this chapter. Not only will one recognise, it will be argued, in the founding-conserving of “the nation,” and thus the nationalistic, the very same economy of dependence-exclusion by which “the human,” and thus the humanist, constitutes itself over against the phantasm of “the Animal,” but also that the “fully realised” body of humanism is in fact the realisation of the very pathic, undying animal against which it sought to found its essential difference. Furthermore, we must also attend, in addition to the notion of “humanity,” to the question of “community.” What, exactly, do we understand by this term? Is there always community, human or otherwise, whether as an empirical fact or a regulative Idea? Or, is there always only its impossibility?

From there, I consider how “community” relates to both hospitality and sharing, concepts with which it seems inextricably bound. How might the concept of “community” relate to common-sense and to common-law, to law and right, and to the state of law? What then of “the nonhuman community” or of animal communities? Apartheid, writes Derrida in “Racism’s Last Word,” “is the ultimate imposture of a so-called state of law that doesn’t hesitate to base itself on a would-be original hierarchy—of natural right or divine right, the two are never mutually exclusive” (379).

And yet, for the nonhuman animal such is *every* state of human law. If apartheid, the imposture of a law based upon a purportedly God-given, that is, *natural*(ised) hierarchy, is thus the denial by law of the common, might we not suggest, preliminarily at least, that the communal, the shared-in-common, can only take (its) place outside of racist, sexist, and speciesist states, a spacing or phrasing beyond both sovereignty *and* bestiality?

Beginning with an unorthodox reading (based upon the conclusions drawn in the second chapter) of what Nietzsche describes as the right to make promises, in the second half of this part I aim to demonstrate that “sharing”—like “hospitality,” like “community”—is precisely *impossible*. That is, the infinite potentiality that “is” being-shared-with *constitutes* being-together only insofar as it withdraws in and as every actualisation. Community, I thus argue, is this shared passivity: the shared condition of not-being-able to share. Such an aporetic formulation echoes the inability and insufficiency which, as we saw in the previous chapters, marks the hospitable encounter. An inability and insufficiency which, it should be recalled, is always the result of *habit*, of habitat, of dwelling, of remaining, and of *ethos*—of inhabitude, in short. One way to understand this is that the possibility, that is, the actualisation of sharing is always undone in being already with others—it is to always inhabit a community and thus to be excluded from that very community as a result.

Furthermore, every time we share, that is, every time we mark our share of the untimely with every sharing of time, “we” must betray “our” community, or rather, betray a shared community *affect*, and thus betray the very notion of “we.” The question of community is thus transformed: in sharing—this notion which appears to be the very condition of community, this sharing and thus dividing or diluting of the One which is thus to share the very condition of community—is community therefore rendered impossible?

It is rather, I argue with Nietzsche, that betrayal is the very condition of community, and thus of vigilance, responsibility, and loyalty. In this sense, only betrayal calls forth a being with the *right to make promises*, that is, to rightfully mark improperly, to *revalue*, in contrast to those “feeble windbags who promise without the right to so do” (Nietzsche *Genealogy*, II:2). This betrayal, moreover, takes the paradoxical figure of the nomad, of the lone wanderer ever seeking community and commonality, recalling us to the lifelong undergoing of Kafka’s Investigator. A betrayal which must nonetheless be given *time*, and hence a given *death*. Furthermore,

such thinking, I propose, centres upon a giving finitude which, as we saw at the end of the second chapter, in bearing witness, responds to the nonsubstitutable deaths of “living beings” in re-marking the shared proximal distance that is being-with.

Finally, I will argue that, beyond humanity and thus beyond its domination, community begins—albeit only ever posthumously—with “giving” death, given time, to nonhuman beings: a giving of that which precisely cannot be given, and which in so doing always again betrays the “human brotherhood.” To become animal is, as we shall see, the right to constitute the *future*, and with the Nietzschean animal in particular we find just such a futural being: a way of being with the strength to outlive “the human.”

## 8. *Plus un* “Holocaust”: Speciesism, Nationalism, and Communities of Death

### Introduction: The dignity of Man

To betray, to be traitors to humanity: what, exactly, might this mean? In *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1965), Hannah Arendt follows the French prosecutor at Nuremberg in identifying the Shoah not as a crime against *humanity*, but rather as “a crime against the human *status*” (257). This is a very important distinction, marking as it does the necessity of reckoning with the worst in any positing of a community beyond the human. Nevertheless, it will be argued, it is the vigilance of an unending and unlawful betrayal of the *notion* of “humanity” which in fact remains to render such crimes against the human status *impossible*. And yet, in the promised betrayal of “humanity,” what ways of being-in-common remain to be affirmed?

Humanism, as we have seen, depends upon an exclusion of “the animal” in order to at once found and conserve what Claude Lévi-Strauss—perhaps but not necessarily referring to Kant’s *Würdigkeit*—describes as “the myth of a dignity exclusive to human nature” (cit. de Fontenay *Le silence*, 47), and which Derrida describes as “the infinite transcendence of that which is worth more than it” (“Faith and Knowledge,” 87).<sup>103</sup> Moreover, Lévi-Strauss continues, it is this myth of a human value beyond “merely” living which, in whatever historical guise, “suffered [*a fait essuyer*] to nature itself its first mutilation from which all other mutilations must inevitably follow” (cit. de Fontenay *Le silence*, 47). What then might such mutilations be which, insofar as they *inevitably* follow, are therefore structurally or genetically implicated in this ideology of a “nature” which is exclusively, properly, human?

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<sup>103</sup> On the concept of “dignity,” see Giorgio Agamben *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (1999). In section 2.15—the importance of which will become increasingly clear—Agamben concludes as follows: “When referring to the legal status of Jews after the racial laws, the Nazi’s also used a term that implied a kind of dignity: *entwürdigten*, literally to ‘deprive of dignity.’ The Jew is a human being who has been deprived of all *Würde*, all dignity: he is merely human—and, for this reason, non-human” (68). Later, Agamben notes how “the dignity offended in the camp is not that of life but rather of death” (70) and that, in Auschwitz, “people did not die; rather, corpses were produced. Corpses without death, non-humans whose decease is debased into a matter of serial production” (72). The intertwining of the economy of animalisation and the logic of the slaughterhouse are in this way rendered explicit in the camps.

What *has to* follow, in other words, from the positing of an inalienable dignity of whatever stripe or mark which both constitutes, and consists in, a single animal species, an infinite transcendence which thus marks out one species, even before birth, as *not*-animal (rather than *non*-animal)? As we shall see, Carl Schmitt offers one answer when he asserts that the ideological construct that is this notion of the human's innate and universal humanity brings with it nothing less than the end of the political, its displacing and thus depoliticisation of the site of politics providing instead only an "especially useful" instrument of imperialism.

### **Purifying the political: Carl Schmitt**

In *The Concept of the Political* (1932), Schmitt argues that the concept of "humanity" is never political insofar as it "excludes the concept of the enemy, because the enemy does not cease to be a human being—and hence there is no specific differentiation in that concept" (54). This follows necessarily from his claim that "the political" inheres only in the discrimination of "friend [*Freund*]" from "enemy [*Feind*]," the "high points [*Die Höhepunkte*]" of which—and this will become important later—being "simultaneously the moments [*Augenblicke*] in which the enemy is, in concrete clarity, recognised as the enemy" (67). The purest event or advent of the political, in other words, consists of, and is made manifest as, the instant in which "the enemy" comes to be recognised *as* "the enemy," an instant in which "the State [*Staat*]" delimits itself whilst thenceforth always reserving for itself the possibility of war [*pōlemos*].

Hence, politics is never the revelation of an essential, "natural" or even "just" enmity, but rather only the moment in which the *production* of the enemy (who is as yet neither friend nor enemy) *as* "the enemy" comes to make sense. Its material clarity, therefore, resides in its *performance* of the figure of the political, in the performing of its own figure. That is, in enacting the performative tautology "'the Enemy' is the enemy." Its illumination, in other words, is the result of a *technical* political virtuosity which, in its inaugurating moment, produces the naturalising transparency of a meaningful performative. At the instant of its founding "high point," however, such meaning must immediately succumb to a degree of obscurity, beginning its falling away from the summit [*Die Höhepunkte*] into the depoliticised darkness of its dissemination. Thus, lacking the specific friend-enemy differentiation which marks the

opening of politics, “humanity” for Schmitt cannot therefore “wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet” (54).

Even if, like Schmitt, we also (at least for the moment) all too obviously ignore the place of “the animal” on “this planet,” such a claim nonetheless finds itself immediately complicated by the introduction of the figure of “the Jew” as reproduced in Germany under the Nazis and, further, by Schmitt’s own role as self-appointed Nazi ideologue. The point here, of course, is that Jews under the Nazis were reconfigured as *nonhuman* (as opposed to the “primitive” humanity of the Slavs, for example), that is, precisely *as* a separate species, an *ahomo sapiens* and in this sense *as* an *alien* race.

Despite Schmitt’s undeniably reductive logic and, indeed, the reactive defense of the nation-state which his concept of the political presupposes, a defence which needs to be read in the context of both its interwar production and Schmitt’s own political commitments, one cannot thereby simply exclude his discourse from consideration. Of particular importance is the part played by the production of the “enemy” or, better, of the “foreigner” or “outsider,” in the constitution of boundaries not only geopolitical, but also ideological, which serve to differentiate the sovereign Self from absolute Other.

Indeed, it is Schmitt’s “purification” of the political, that is, his positing of the political as a domain apparently purified of any and all economic, aesthetic, moral or religious entanglements, which marks his reactionary discourse as dangerously right-wing. Such a “purification” in fact constitutes its *own* depoliticisation, insofar as it erases material and “religious” interest (in the broadest sense) from the political realm. Instead, Schmitt claims that the whole of politics inheres in the constitution of an other *as* “the Enemy,” an enemy which must remain abstract, a phantasm or spectre, against and by which an equally phantasmatic “homeland” *thence* constitutes itself. The production of fear, in other words, of the other and of war (whether potential or actual), serves both to unify a nation and to efface any thought of underlying economic and/or ideological interests. In this, one cannot fail to recognise the “crypto-Schmittianism” of the Bush administration and beyond.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> On this, see Simon Critchley *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (London & New York: Verso, 2008), 133-148.



Hence, and by way of the strange slave syllogism of Nietzsche's man of *ressentiment*,<sup>105</sup> it thus remains necessary to always again render an account of the mutual articulation of the putatively abstract "political" (i.e. geopolitical) "enemy" and the *doxa* (or *theodoxa*) of evil in the conservation of *both* the "global" parliamentary-capitalism of the West *and* the neo-liberal humanist subject. Only in this way does the value of the *symbolic* economy of the absolute other and of radical evil find itself interrupted by its articulation within a resolutely *material* economy. That is, by the uncanny reinscription of material suffering in place of an apparently iconic use, an economy of suffering within which all living beings are implicated.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, and as will be explored in more detail later, this is at least part of the reason for the hyperbolic reaction to the improper phrasing "animal holocaust." A phrasing which, insofar as it returns the thought of the Shoah to that of vulnerable bodies and to the intensity of suffering rather than invoking an empty notion of "Evil," thus recalls to cognition, from beyond its spectacular economy, the singular crime, ongoing, endlessly reiterated, that is the industrialised genocide of living beings.

Here, Schmitt's political commitments and extreme, lifelong anti-Semitism serve to focus ever more sharply the issue at hand. How is it that Schmitt, perhaps *the* theorist of the modern nation-state, became perhaps *the* supporter of the Nazi regime, given the absolute distinction between *hostis* and *inimicus* upon which he thus grounds his notion of the indivisible border? According to Schmitt, the external and abstract enemy [*hostis*] which, in being recognised *as* "the Enemy" constitutes the unifying community effect of "the Nation," can and must never be that of a *particular* enemy [*inimicus*]. The enemy, in other words, can and must never be "my" personal enemy, insofar as such subjective passions can never be political insofar as they can never be "purified" of individual (economic, moral, aesthetic, religious, familial) interest. As a result, "the Enemy," which is rather always and only "the Enemy of the State" ("of" thus understood in the double genitive) insofar as it functions both to determine and conserve the State's own borders by way of an abstract or *public* difference between enemy and friend, can and must never be this or that (or those) particular being(s) who dwell with "us" within "our" borders.

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<sup>105</sup> See the first essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, as well as Deleuze *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 111-114.

<sup>106</sup> An intersection disclosed most explicitly by what might be termed "animal capital," as we will see in the final chapter.

Indeed, this necessarily remains the case even if this or that particular enemy would nonetheless *seem* to belong to the abstract category of the “public” enemy. Such a “seeming” would for Schmitt thus constitute a misunderstanding or, rather, a *misreading* of the political, in that such material specificity contaminates its “pure” figure, breaching the traditional security of its borders. The Public Enemy reproduced “in general” must therefore never evoke subjective passions, must never have the effect of inciting hatred or contempt for an enemy, whether publically or privately. The enemy *for* Schmitt (as “subjected” to and by the State), rather than *of* Schmitt (as a would-be autonomous subject), may be “Israel” or “Judaism” or “Islam,” but must never, however, be *this* Jew or *this* Muslim who lives amongst “us.”

The founding identification of the enemy, and thence the friend, is thus purely geographical, a geo-graphy determined by a fantastic border, its spectre the nonplace through which both space and place come to be defined. Hence, we are returned to our question: how is it that Schmitt can support the elimination (in every sense, including its (in)digestive relation) of millions of German Jews under the Nazi regime and, indeed, remain a committed anti-Semite long after the collapse of the Reich?

This is a question which cannot be answered in any detail here, requiring as it does a far more extensive engagement with Schmitt’s entire *oeuvre* than can be attempted here, but it nevertheless remains a question which needs to be pursued. Preliminarily, however, it is clear that the question concerns the possibility or otherwise of “purifying” the concept of the Enemy of any “subjective” enmity. It concerns, in other words, the separation of the public and the private.<sup>107</sup>

To recap, the summit of the political is attained only in the performance of its own figure, the instantaneous *coup* in which the not yet friend-or-enemy comes to be recognised *as* “the Enemy.” At the same time, insofar as it is the figure of “the Enemy” which thence *constitutes* the State, and thus the community affect which marks the differentiation of the public from the privately subjective, the fault-line between the “public” and the “private” too is necessarily drawn by this same instant of recognition. The instant of the political, in other words, divides “the public” from “the private,” effacing an already existing complex of relations in the positing of a simple fantastical opposition which, founding and conserving the state, unifies the elements of both the friend-enemy and private-public dichotomies.

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<sup>107</sup> On this, see Derrida *The Politics of Friendship*, 83-137.

As we have seen, however, for such a re-cognition to take place it must, upon its “first” appearance, always already be repeated. Hence, in its engendering double movement of protention and retention, the “high point” of the political, the indivisible instant of its *coup*, is therefore always already “contaminated.” Inaugurated in the abrupt, naturalising recognition of its sense, its *meaning* has, in other words, always already gone astray, destinerred. Hence, its falling away into the habitual obscurity of depoliticisation. The friend-enemy and public-private divisions constituted in and as the “purity” of the political performative are thus, as the condition of their founding, always impure, their borders already breached. In this, the pure concepts of both “enemy” and “public” are already corrupted by the “friend” and the “private” and vice versa, the particular within tainted by the abstract without. Viewed in another way, as Andrew Benjamin writes in his discussion of Pascal’s *Pensées*, “the Jew” (or “the Muslim” or “the Foreigner” or indeed, and with varying degrees of constraint, “the Animal”) is named and thus given an identity “with which *actual* Jews [or Muslims or foreigners or nonhuman animals] would then have to live” (*Of Jews and Animals*, 186; my emphasis).

### **Making Enemies, Inhuman**

Such problematising of the friend-enemy dichotomy thus inevitably returns us to the place or nonplace of the foreign in the Same, to the asylum seeker that “is” every living being, and to the discursive production of both nationalism and racism. Furthermore, it re-turns the figure of “the Animal” upon which every *human* community depends, an exclusive coming to be which, following Schmitt, opens in always opening itself to a future war [*pōlemos*] against actual nonhuman animals. What remains to be considered then, is what according to Schmitt is the absolute nonrelation between “the concept of the political” and “the concept of humanity.” It is here, I will argue in attempting to follow Lévi-Strauss, that “the concept of humanity”—and, more precisely, its unavoidable opening onto a terrifying dehumanisation by way of the abstract spectre of “the Animal”—in fact discloses, and in so doing deconstructs, the terrifying xenophobia which inheres in the Schmittian “concept of the political.”

As we have seen, the impossible “pure” abstraction that is “the Enemy”—an abstraction which must remain as untouched by the economic, the juridical, and the religious as it is by any subjective passion—rather functions to efface complexity so as to *produce* a simple binary opposition. An opposition, moreover, which, insofar as the impermeability of its border cannot be maintained, must then be repeatedly *reproduced* in what is a conservative re-founding of its foundation. “The Enemy,” in other words, is a myth, a phantasm or a spectre against which the *state* and *State* of *ressentiment* constitutes itself. In this, “the Enemy” doubles and is doubled by, supports and is supported by, the myth or spectre of “the Animal” against which the properly human *status* constitutes itself. Necessarily mutually articulated, Schmitt’s posited binaries collapse into each other in reinforcing each other. The result, as we will see, is that, insofar as private hatred passes through the animal, so too does the public enemy, contamination working in both directions: “the Animal” corrupts “the Enemy” just as this enemy contaminates this animal, the Enemy corrupts animals just as the Animal corrupts enemies, and so on. Speciesism and racism, in other words, cannot be dissociated in the (re)production both of the subject and of the subject’s shared community affect.

To recap, the identification of the political enemy, the “high point” of politics, is both purely abstract and geo-graphical, the recognised spacing in which the space and place of both the enemy and then the friend comes to be defined. It is, in other words, a distinction and delimitation thus rooted to the soil, the home-land. It is the soil therefore, which is the “concrete” material in which is realised and which real-ises, that is, *makes* actual, the abstraction that is “the political” (*Concept of the Political*, 30). Friends must belong to, and share in, the same soil. The community, the State, is bound, and bounded, by the soil, that of its proper ground.

What then, if the would-be “friend” (in the abstract sense) is *not* bound by the same soil? What, for example, of the dispossessed, the diasporic, those without a *recognised* “homeland” beneath their feet? The friend must share, and share in, the soil, but, as we know, this ground, this soil is already contaminated, invaded by parasites who have already rendered impure the political body in its very founding. The body politic, in short, will have been already corrupted by the rootless within, by the parasitical homeless who will have already breached the security of its borders. The exemplary figure of which is, of course, “the wandering Jew,” condemned forever to seek a mythical promised land.

Here then, we discover yet again the *specific* bodies who inhabit the “purely” *private* relation—those of the foreign in the Same—, and who are thus subject and subjected to the “justifiable” hatred of the friend (*inimicus*) whilst at once serving to maintain the abstract, *public* Enemy (*hostis*). That is to say, all those actual beings who, having had an identity imposed upon them, then have to live it. The border delimiting the “purely us,” in other words, insofar as it is *reproduced*, must thus be produced from *within* as from *without*. Such private hatred of the enemy-friend, moreover, must pass by way of the Animal, without which the relation to the foreign in the Same would remain abstract, a simple, and above all passionless, question of territorial displacement. To understand this however, we must return to that danger which, as Schmitt writes, inheres in the concept of “humanity.”

Schmitt, it should be recalled, claims that the concept of “humanity” can never be political as it lacks the differentiation of friend and enemy, insofar as the enemy, that is, the *public* enemy, “does not cease to be a human being” and therefore “humanity” cannot “wage war” (54). However, without the political—that is, the constitutive discrimination between enemy and friend—there can be no humanity, but only, for Schmitt, the extreme *inhumanity* which is the world of purely *private* interest. The recognition of the enemy as “the Enemy” is, therefore, the *properly human*. Humanity, in other words, is the condition of the shared yet agonistic community affect, and which for Schmitt is thus manifest “properly” only in the *nation-state*. Being-human is, in short, *indissociable* from the recognition of the enemy. To be human is thus to maintain the real possibility or actuality of war (*pōlemos*). Such a war, therefore, is at once a war against the enemy, a war against inhumanity, and a war against the foreign in the Same. “Life against life,” as Derrida, in an echo of Nietzsche, describes it in his reading of Schmitt.<sup>108</sup>

The constitution of “the human” (against “the animal”) cannot be separated therefore from the constitution of “the enemy” (against “the inhumanity” of “private interest”). A proper community of friends (the nation-state) is, in other words, constituted against the non-human or the not-properly-human which lacks access to the positing of a purely abstract externality and thus the sovereign decision. A decision which, moreover, remains undecidable: insofar as “the friend” and at once “the State” are constituted only subsequent to this founding decision which gives “the enemy” to

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<sup>108</sup> See *Politics of Friendship*, 112-137; especially 123-4 and 135-6n18. For Nietzsche’s use of the phrase in relation to the ascetic ideal, see *On the Genealogy of Morals*, III:13.

be recognised, “who” or “what” posits this originary exceptional decision prior to, and constitutive of, both the human and the common cannot be determined. Here then, we find yet another question of the nonplace of the Origin.

Returning to the claim as to the impossibility of a *political* concept of “humanity,” this is not, as Schmitt makes clear, to say that wars cannot be, and are not, waged in the *name* of “humanity.” In this latter, writes Schmitt in “The Legal World Revolution,” instead of a political concept, “humanity” becomes instead “an asymmetrical counter-concept” (88; cit. *Concept*, xxii). This asymmetry—an asymmetry which, as I have argued throughout, is indissociable, on the structural level, from the concept of “humanity” itself—inevitably manifests itself in its delineation, in the drawing of a line. A division or discrimination which, as Schmitt writes, “thereby denies the quality of being human to a disturber or destroyer, ... the negatively valued person becomes an unperson, and his life is no longer of the highest value: it becomes worthless and must be destroyed” (xxii). We are of course very familiar with this process of displacement by now, this “dehumanising” or “animalising” reconfiguration by which the “disturber”—this parasitical contaminant displaced and nonplaced within the State or community of “friends”—ceases to be properly human.

Thus, as Schmitt writes in *The Concept of the Political*, “[t]hat wars are waged in the name of humanity is not a contradiction of this simple truth; quite the contrary, it has an especially intensive political meaning [*intensiven politischen Sinn*]” (54). However, insofar as the reproductive shift towards animality must for Schmitt remain unremarked in order to repress the founding-conserving recognition of the animal *as* “the Animal”—the “enemy,” so to speak, against which “humanity,” the friendly community of humans *thence* constitutes itself in the positing of what Schmitt claims to be the purely *political* performative—Schmitt can thus only mark the *consequences* of its operation, but not the means:

When a state fights its political enemy in the name of humanity [*Wenn ein Staat im Namen der Menschheit seinen politischen Feind bekämpft*], it is not a war for the sake of humanity, but a war wherein a particular state [*Staat*] seeks to usurp a universal concept against its military opponent. At the expense of its opponent, it tries to identify itself with humanity in the same way as one can misuse peace, justice, progress, and civilization in order to claim these as one’s own and to deny the same to the *enemy*. The “concept of humanity” is an especially useful ideological instrument of imperialist expansion [*“Menschheit” ist ein besonders brauchbares ideologisches Instrument imperialistischer Expansionen*], and in its ethical-

humanitarian form it is a specific vehicle of economic imperialism. ... To confiscate the word humanity, to invoke and monopolise such an exalted [erhabenen] term *can only be the sign of the terrifying demand* [nur den schrecklichen Anspruch manifestieren], such as *denying the enemy the quality of being human* and declaring him to be an outlaw of humanity; and a war can thereby be driven to the most extreme inhumanity [zur äussersten Unmenschlichkeit] (54, trans. modified and emphasis added).<sup>109</sup>

For Schmitt then, such a war waged against an enemy in the *name* [Nammen] of “humanity” is, in common with civil war (*stāsis*), not a “proper” war, but rather its “misuse” which *destroys* rather than *conserves* the balance of states. Its monopolisation of a universal concept for *private* gain—economic, ideological or territorial, or most likely all at once—corrupts the (impossible) passionless purity of a public enemy. As such, its impassioned demand is *terrifying*, inasmuch as it is driven by *nonpolitical* power, by subjective, economic, or even aesthetic desire, by moral or religious will, and is therefore necessarily without limit. Exceeding the concept and the limit of war [*pōleμος*], its impropriety is no longer or not yet war, and as such threatens to push this so-called “war” to the very extremes of destruction by way of the animalising movement.

When the concept of “humanity” is invoked, in other words, there can be no limit to the destruction which follows. Here then, we are given to understand what Lévi-Strauss calls the “first mutilation”—that of the posited “dignity” of humanity—and what inevitably follows: “in the name of the human, of human rights and humanitarianism, other men are then treated like beasts, and consequently one becomes oneself inhuman” (Derrida *Beast*, 73).

What is terrifying therefore, is the depoliticising corruption of the political by the non-political, the contamination of the public by private interest. And yet, how is it that such a weakening or falling away from the “high point” of the purely political can have “an especially intensive political meaning”? Rather, such “intensity” exceeds the limits of Schmitt’s own discourse, breaching the purified domain of the political. In other words, the terrifying *political* manoeuvrings which reside within the would-be *de-politicising* “counter-concept” of “humanity”—i.e., a concept which is counter to the political, a-political or even anti-political and thus absolutely private—make explicit its imbrication with the political, that is, with the friend-enemy binary. Hence,

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<sup>109</sup> Derrida discusses this passage in Seminar III of *The Beast and the Sovereign*. The modifications of the translation here are based largely on that reading.

Schmitt discloses within the political-nonpolitical dichotomy an *a priori* impropriety which is the condition for, and effaced in, the inauguration of their very differentiation. Indeed, this is already marked by the rhetoric of “high points [*Höhepunkte*]” which thus gestures to differences of *degree*, and not of *kind* as Schmitt claims.

Part of the network of inculcation constituted along vectors of power, the friend-enemy and human-animal pairings thus, as we have already seen, “require and deploy each other for the purpose of their own articulation” (Butler *Bodies that Matter*, 18). Indeed, how could the positing of an external enemy by which a “homeland” comes to be *not* in fact have an individual, “private” affect, precisely in becoming a citizen of that homeland with all that that might entail, and never excluding—for Schmitt—the possibility of one’s own sacrifice in a conserving war against the “public” enemy?

The privately-public or publicly-private enemy, that of the rootless within, is thus always the subject of, and subject to, the “real possibility” of “physical killing [*physischen Tötung*]” which for Schmitt is indissociable from war (*pōlemos*) and from the recognition of “the Enemy” (*Concept of the Political*, 33). The real possibility of physical killing, in other words, falls back on the private as well as the public enemy. It is a possibility, however, which can only be “founded” by way of the *animalisation* of the foreign in the Same, rather than by the abstract, passionless conservation of the State. This privately-public enemy can never be “the Enemy” in all its purity but, at the intersection of the domestic and the foreign, can thus only be a parasite, corrupting the purity of the homeland, an impure foreigner amidst the community of friends whose very presence contaminates the soil. Threatening the domestic, such foreigners carry with them the risk of civil war or revolution (*stāsis*), thus embodying in the specific the potential destruction of the State which in its turn then justifies a reactive politics of fear.

According to Schmitt’s logic (and indeed, that of the crypto-Schmittianism of the US), a logic which values the integrity of the State above all else, such “parasites”—improper beings—must therefore be eliminated, for which the reconfiguration of Jews as “lice” under the Nazis constitutes the paradigmatic example. Moreover, the very phantasticity of “the Enemy” means that its founding constitution does not require another “actual” (constituted) nation-state, or even a determined geopolitical territory, in order to function. Indeed, the impossibility of determining and thus identifying the “actual” enemy intensifies, in its indeterminacy,



both the perception of the threat represented by the “enemy”—who could now be anywhere and everywhere, the (almost) undetectable foreigner within the Same—and of course the reaction such fear subsequently justifies.

Insofar as this founding contamination is undeniable it can, as Derrida would say, therefore *only* be denied. Hence, in the moment of a phantasmatic founding disavowal, the body—here the Schmittian body politic but equally the properly humanist body, as we shall see in the next part—must remain pure, its borders inviolate. At the same time however, the phantasmatic nature of such borders always already requires their reproduction, and thus the conserving reiteration of its founding disavowal. Consequently, to maintain both the (spectral) purity of the State and the (spectral) purity of the human, and with each supporting the other, the foreign in the Same must ever again be excluded. An exclusion which is, as Arendt writes of the Shoah, “a crime against the human *status*” rather than a “crime against humanity” (*Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 257).<sup>110</sup>

Hence, both animalised humans and nonhuman animals must suffer an endless, grossly asymmetrical war (*pōlemos* not *stāsis*) as a result of that “ultimate imposture of a so-called state of law that doesn’t hesitate to base itself on a would-be original hierarchy” (Derrida “Racism’s Last Word,” 379). Such a war thereby delivers the relation of “humanity” and “the State,” the valorised terms of fabulous oppositions which serve to unify their elements in and as the effacement of the complex of already existing relations, over to the most extreme inhumanity. In this, one can hear too the Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer when he writes that scholars and philosophers—

have convinced themselves that man, the worst transgressor of all the species, is the crown of creation. All other creatures were created merely to provide him with food, pelts, to be tormented, exterminated. In relation to them, all people are Nazis; for the animals it is an eternal Treblinka” (“The Letter Writer,” epigraph to Patterson).

In summary then, in and with the name of “humanity” we disclose only the figure of Western imperialist terror, a “vehicle of economic imperialism” inflicting extreme inhumanity upon its enemies. It is also to begin to understand the need to

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<sup>110</sup> Interesting in this context is Schmitt’s claim that not only is “humanity” not a political concept, but furthermore that “*no status* [*Status*, rather than *Staat*] *corresponds to it*” (55, my emphasis).

move always beyond such delimitation—a move, as Jean-Luc Nancy writes, towards “a world offered not to ‘humanity’ but to its singular bodies” (*Corpus*, 41).

### **The inviolate body: poetics and politics of the organism**

Considerations of “common humanity” or of the “human community” have occupied a privileged place throughout the history of philosophy. However, such a placing here of the notion of the “human community” together with its common-sense synonym “common humanity” is by no means fortuitous. Not only are these synonyms in fact antonyms—insofar as the latter refers to what is “common” to every individual human being, rather than to a common relation *between* all human beings, and can thus be more helpfully termed “universal humanity”—but also their everyday interchangeability in fact serves to disclose the limit, in every sense, of “the human community.” This exchangeability of heterogeneous terms, that is to say, remarks the imbrication of the organic body of ontotheological humanism with the biotic body of nationalism, and figured by the phantasmatic boundaries of the human and the political organism, and by the mythic oneness both of the common body and the individual bodies which compose it. The concepts of “humanity” and of “community” (which includes, but is not reducible to, “the nation”) thus come together in the positing of an immanent organism. As Jean-Luc Nancy writes in *The Inoperative Community* (1986), it is—

precisely the immanence of man to man, or it is *man*, taken absolutely, considered as the immanent being par excellence, that constitutes the stumbling block to a thinking of community. A community presupposed as having to be one of human beings presupposes that it effect, or that it must effect, as such and integrally, its own essence, which is itself the accomplishment of the essence of humanness. ... Consequently, economic ties, technological operations, and political fusion (into a body or under a leader) represent or rather present, expose, and realise this essence necessarily in themselves. Essence is set to work in them; through them, it becomes its own work. This is what we have called “totalitarianism,” but it might be better named “immanentism,” as long as we do not restrict the term to designating certain types of societies or regimes but rather see in it the general horizon of our time (3).

The immanent or totalitarian body, insofar as it must work to accomplish its own essence “as such and integrally,” demands first of all its circumscription. It depends for its existence, in other words, upon the exclusion of its other through the reproduction of its phantasmatic borders, coming into being as such only subsequent to the production of these borders and thus rendering it secondary to an originary complex of relations. A limit then, is the *a priori* condition of its positing of essence.

Moreover, for both the immanent human body and the immanent human community—and here one begins to understand how the one comes to stand in for the other—this constitutive limit works to fuse every human being who has ever lived or may ever live into a single body. This, it should be noted, is irrespective of whether the “essence of humanness” being put to work is posited as internal to the individual human organism over against the nonhuman animal, or else as inhering within every relation between individuals over against the monad, that is, as either infra- or intersubjective. In the same way, the fascistic nation works to fuse into a single body every *citizen* who has ever lived or may ever live. One thinks here of those reclaimed “national heroes” who come again to represent the “essence” of the nation, to spectrally embody the spectral body, as well as the militaristic rhetoric concerning the “threat” to its future integrity. The slave morality that is nationalism, in other words, demands the working of an immanent body, fused into the commonality of *ressentiment* by way of an outside against which it can then constitute itself. Nietzsche, we recall, defines “slave morality” as that which “from the outset says No to what is “outside,” what is “different,” what is “not itself” ... this *need* to direct one’s view outward instead of back to oneself—is of the essence of *ressentiment*” (*Genealogy*, I:10).

That this essence must become the body’s own work—an organic setting itself to work in order to accomplish itself, that is to say, a setting itself through its self the work of becoming *purely its self*—demands a specific concept of the border: that of the “living membrane.” This is because, in a working towards the purity or immanence of a strictly delimited “body,” the immanent body thus requires a “natural” border. It requires, that is, a *hymen* through which impurities may be expelled, but which at the same time admits *only* what is assimilable within, or consumable by, the organic system in its work towards perfect autonomy and thus immortality that is the work of pure immanence. However, as Derrida points out, for such a “living body” to achieve this immortality of autonomy “it would have to die in advance, to let itself die or kill

itself in advance, for fear of being *altered* by what comes from outside, by the other, period. Hence the theatre of death to which racisms, biologisms, organicisms, eugenics are so often given” (“Artifactualities,” 18-9). Here then, we can begin to discern the autodestructive *tēlos*—its structural “suiciding”—of the totalitarian body, be it the human body, the delimited body politic, or the global body of “humanity,” a suiciding intimately connected with that which Derrida elsewhere calls the “autoimmunitary structure.”<sup>111</sup>

It is a *tēlos*, moreover, which renders *death* as the *truth* of undying, death as the truth of an ecstatic “One-ness” beyond all division, and thus, pathic and undying, its lifeless perfection, the *tēlos* of the immanent body, becomes the truth of “the Animal” as traditionally conceived. We will return to this in a moment, but here it suffices to note that its work of oppression, of immanence, functions in the same way as the pathic, undying essence of “the Animal” serves to stage the theatre of death that is the contemporary zootechnical holocaust. Nancy puts it as follows:

immanence, if it were to come about, would instantly suppress community, or communication, as such. Death is not only the example of this, it is its truth. In death ... there is no longer any community or communication: there is only the continuous identity of atoms. This is why political or collective enterprises dominated by a will to absolute immanence have as their truth the truth of death. Immanence, communal fusion, contains no other logic than that of the suicide of the community that is governed by it. ... The fully realised person of individualistic or communistic humanism is the dead person (*Inoperative Community*, 12-13).

This suicidal logic, which Schmitt’s conserving concept of the political inevitably gestures towards, can only produce a body of *ressentiment*, can only reproduce a private hatred for the improper, for the foreign body corrupting the purity of the Same, which henceforth comes to be seen in terms of a *destiny*. Such destiny must be understood in contrast to an abstract enmity justified by a publicly sanctioned “enemy” which claims to render such intense—intensely produced and intensely productive—hatred as “passionless,” that is, *as* senseless. Rather, destiny, by definition, requires neither action nor passion, neither decision nor responsibility, and indeed, in the

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<sup>111</sup> “The immunitary reaction protects the ‘indemnity’ of the body proper in producing antibodies against foreign antigens. As for the process of auto-immunisation ... it consists for a living organism, as is well known and in short, of protecting itself against its self-protection by destroying its own immune system” (“Faith and Knowledge,” 80n27).

promised fulfilment of its auto-immanence, ultimately has as its goal the elimination of action and passion *as such* in the fusion of ecstatic One-ness.

It is not by chance that Derrida, in his discussion of the autoimmunitary structure, refers to what goes by the name of public *health* and military *security* as the “two great forms of immunity” (*Rogues*, 155). “The immune” here concerns nothing less than the immanent, self-determined and self-determining body which seeks, in its work and as its working towards perfect health, to expel in suicidal fashion that upon which it depends for its founding-conserving function: “the autoimmunitary haunts the community and its system of immunitary survival like the hyperbole of its own possibility. Nothing in *common*, nothing immune, safe and sound, *heilig* and holy, nothing unscathed in the autonomous living present without a risk of autoimmunity” (Derrida “Faith and Knowledge,” 82).

Setting itself through its self the work of becoming its self, death for the immanent body, continues Nancy,

is not the unmasterable excess of finitude, but the infinite fulfilment of an immanent life .... Since [Gottfried Wilhelm] Leibniz there has been no death in our universe: in one way or another an absolute circulation of meaning (of values, of ends, of History) fills or reabsorbs all finite negativity, draws from each finite singular destiny a surplus value of humanity or an infinite superhumanity. But this presupposes, precisely, the death of each and all in the life of the infinite (*Inoperative Community*, 13).

The reference to Leibniz is instructive here, namely because the notion of the pathic, undying animal receives perhaps its most explicit formulation in Leibniz’s “Monadology” (1714). According to Leibniz, nonhuman animals, lacking reason, constitute a continuum of unfolding and enfolding, an unending reconfiguring with neither beginning nor end, neither birth nor death (a vitalism whose echo can still be found in Deleuze & Guattari and beyond<sup>112</sup>). Paradoxically then, the “fully realised” body of individualistic or communistic humanism, constituted in its negation of “the Animal,” turns full phantasmatic circle, *presupposing in its mythical perfection the very pathic, undying animal against which it sought to found its essential difference*. Thus, the dialectical teleology of humanism collapses in on itself, the fall of the Fall. The life of the fully-realised body is thus the perfection of the *nonliving beyond* finitude. It is in

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<sup>112</sup> For a recent example, see Akira Mizuta Lippit’s *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

this sense that Derrida can write of “absolute evil” as “absolute life, fully present life, the one that does not know death and does not want to hear about it” (*Spectres*, 220).

In summary, the impossibly immanent and immune body of both individualistic and communistic humanism is an originary absence of life, a nonliving body which must nevertheless be protected from contamination, which must thus turn against itself, extirpate itself of all finitude and thus of all life. Here again, it is necessary to recall, and to which we will return once again in the next chapter, Nietzsche’s insistence that any way of being which excludes itself from all other ways of being necessarily degenerates, having excluded itself from that which reserves the possibility of its regeneration. As we have seen, however, Nietzsche is by no means attempting to restart the machinery of dialectical opposition and overcoming. Rather, he seeks to interrupt exactly that movement of Hegelian totality which must subsume or exclude all “particularity” within its “universality”—the former constituting for Hegel in *Philosophy of Nature* a danger analogous to a contagious disease within a body.

Throughout this chapter we have inevitably been thinking, with Arendt and with Schmitt, the placeless place of “the Jew” as figured within Nazi ideology, but also of that placeless place which, so intensely produced and productive today, is marked both by the terms “immigrant,” “asylum seeker” and “terrorist,” and by the rendering insensible and invisible rendering of nonhuman animals. The reference to Hegel, however, is vital to a further understanding of both the suicidal structure of the Nazi “theatre of death” and of the organicism which ultimately serves as the justification for the Shoah.

First of all, it is only insofar as the living organism serves as the figure, the isomorphic model and the proper of the Nazi State, that it is therefore possible for its racist and patriarchal—at base, ethnico-religious—hierarchy to be naturalised by way of its conflation with the discourse of biology. This is evident, for example, in the words of Ernst Haeckel, who “often spoke of groups of people as cancerous growths or malignant viruses,” and of the Nazi physician Fritz Klein, whose claim that “[t]he Jew is the gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind” was typical (Sax *Animals in the Third Reich*, 105). For the Nazis as for Hegel, therefore, the “natural(ised)” body of the state has to be protected from disease understood as an organic lesion that is both a hurt and an abnormality. One which, at least in the case of the former, results in “the medicalisation of virtually all ethical and social questions. ... The medical profession

fighting disease became an image of absolute ruthlessness” (105). Moreover, this absolute privilege accorded to the notion of public health justifies that other “great immunity” identified by Derrida, that of military security. As Boria Sax writes, the subordination of the individual organ<sup>113</sup> to the biotic community—

served for an era of total war, of conflict that was waged through technologies of mass destruction. The idea complemented a militaristic nationalism, since it *fused the entire population together with the landscape into a single body*. Furthermore, it directed the aggression not only against enemy soldiers but also against civilians and entire environments (*Animals in the Third Reich*, 109; emphasis added).

Nazi Germany, however, was not, as Sax suggests (and by way of another animal trope), “meant to be an enormous predator” (109). Rather, it is best figured by what Arendt terms “the banality of evil”: by the mundane directors of public “health” programmes, of biopolitics in the most deadly sense—civil servants like Eichmann who manipulated people and corpses as if transporting freight. Under Hitler, “the Aryan race” was constituted at once as both the proper and the proper future of “humanity”—destined, if only its impurities could be eliminated, to approach perfection and thus immortality (as figured by the thousand-year Reich). In this sense then, given the impurity that was “the Jew,” insofar as it figured that which must be eliminated in order for humanity to achieve its predestined perfection, this meant that the Jewish people were not, and could never be, “human.”<sup>114</sup>

As that which humanity must overcome in order to become absolutely—integrally and immanently—human *as such*, the Jews thus find themselves reconfigured both *as* animals (*as* rats, *as* pigs, etc.) within a rigid zoological hierarchy and also, more specifically, *as* parasites (Jews were to be exterminated, Hitler announced, “*as* lice”). “The Jew,” in other words, is reconfigured as ontologically distinct, a nonhuman species. Hence, in the official media the Jewish people are stripped of their generic human appearance, thus marking them out as excluded from

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<sup>113</sup> Here, however, I argue that Sax is mistaken insofar as he writes of the subordination of the individual *organism* (109), when in fact there can be no “individual organisms,” but rather only particular organs which, until holistically organised or incorporated within the body of the nation, remain lifeless and thus without value.

<sup>114</sup> This is by no means to overlook all those other “foreign bodies” victimised by the Nazi regime—homosexuals, gypsies, communists, Slavic peoples—, all of whom need to be considered both independently and together, and which is necessarily beyond the scope of this thesis.

the category “humanity.” In this way, “the Jew” (and always recalling that this is an identification in advance which actual Jews then have to live) within the body of Nazism comes to be reconstituted *as* inassimilable, rendered at once alien, threatening, insidious, corrupt and corrupting. Reproduced along with and alongside “the animal” as *a priori* discontinuous, “the Jew” is, in other words, beyond incorporation, a nonhuman contagion and a contagious inhumanity. As such, “Jewish-ness” becomes a disease which cannot be overcome, and hence must be exterminated for the Reich to achieve its destiny and purity—irradiated like a cancer or cut away like a gangrenous limb. In this, the proper body of the human and the proper body of the human community thus require each other for their articulation, a relation marked by the nationalist privilege of blood *and* soil: the pure human body and the pure geophysical body.

What in Hegel ostensibly leads to a doctrine of tolerance, for the Nazis leads to the gas chambers. And yet, relying as they both do on the organic work of a body becoming purely its self, the two cannot be so easily separated. In the *Philosophy of Right*, as Andrew Benjamin demonstrates, Hegel has recourse to the will in positing the nonrelation of the “person” and the “animal,” insofar as “[t]he absence of a willed relation between the ‘I’ and its life or body in the animals” means that for Hegel “it [*sic*] does not have ‘a right’ [*Recht*] to that life” (*Of Jews and Animals*, 81). Furthermore, this “entails that the continuity of animal life has a necessarily distinct form” (82). Here then, the absence of a willed relation between “body and soul” serves to deny a *right* to life, which simultaneously justifies a putting to death.

At the same time, such a justification finds its echo in the figure of “the Jew” as a distinct form of life which, once removed to the *Lagers*, is stripped of the willed relation which connects person and life—this is in one sense the “logic” of the camps. In this way, the absence of the Jewish “right” to life is retroactively “proved,” thus providing the Nazis with the “right” of putting to death. Again, what is disclosed is the operative machinery of animalisation, the refusal of an abstract “humanity” which opens the way to slaughter without murder: killing *as* animals. In other words, insofar as Hegel identifies animality as a disease to be overcome by the will to become human, his discourse always already *risks* the camps, a risk all too clearly marked by the figure of the “inassimilable Jew” which haunts his philosophy of tolerance.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> On this figure, see Benjamin *Of Jews and Animals*, 151-177. See also Gayatri Spivak on the “native informant” in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 37-67.



Nevertheless, and despite this complicity, the difference which *actualises* the Lagers is, as Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe write, that the Aryan “Subject” transcends Hegel’s speculative thinking “in an immediate and absolutely ‘natural’ essence: that of blood and race. The Aryan race *is*, by this account, *the* Subject; within it, self-formation is realised and incarnated in ‘the sacred collective egoism which is the “nation”’” (“The Nazi Myth,” 310). The Nazi regime transcends Hegel’s idealist philosophy, in other words, in the mythical fusion of “human” and “community” into a suicidal material body.

### **Shame, Guilt, and Analogising the Holocaust**

There is no direct *analogy*, it should be noted, being posited in the previous section between the intense pain and suffering undergone by those nonhuman animals, living and dead, within industrialised feedlots, slaughterhouses, and laboratories, and those human animals, living and dead, who were and are victims of the Shoah. Rather, what is being argued is their necessary *interrelation* or *reciprocity*, at once their absolute historical singularity and their indissociability. While not an analogy, therefore, there nonetheless remains a *relation*—the relation of humanism and nationalism—, one which I propose to mark here with the improper phrasing “animal holocaust” (and without proper noun status).

It is this, I argue, which makes *permissible*, if not accurate, the holocaust analogy, insofar as the animalisation of Jews in Nazi Germany has as its operative condition the machine which reproduces nonhuman animals as killable. Taking a cue once again from Derrida, this strategy could be figured as *plus un* “Holocaust”: more than one / no more one “Holocaust,” insofar as the term recalls always more than one (and thus) no more one *community* (that is, no immanent or immune body), which is what *must* be learned if we are to ensure no more Holocaust(s). There remains, however, considerable controversy surrounding the use of the Holocaust analogy, which will be explored in this section. Entering into this debate, which will be sketched below, I argue that even if the relation remains implicit, the shock of its implied comparison is nevertheless strategically important (as too, as we shall see, is the comparison with slavery), insofar as it opens “the question of the animal” to the related concerns of shame and guilt. We have already touched on the former in the discussion

of Kafka's investigator, and here I will suggest, by way of Susan Buck-Morss's recent project, that the latter is precisely the guilt of humanism itself.

Proposed most notoriously by Martin Heidegger who, whilst remaining silent as to his own complicity, in 1949 compared the death camps to "mechanised agriculture," the Holocaust analogy is most often condemned on the basis that its equation, in reducing humans to animals, in fact repeats the movement of animalisation which served to legitimise the genocide in the first place.<sup>116</sup> In response, however, David Wood acutely notes that, "while the apparent comparison of the treatment of Jews with the fate of animals ... may be obscene, so too is the implication that these sort of practices would call for a quite different judgment if we were 'just' talking about nonhuman animals" (*The Step Back*, 49). He then recalls the strong argument that—

the architecture and logistical organisation of the death camps ... was stolen, or borrowed from the successful designs of the Chicago stockyards, also fed directly by the railway system. If the industrialisation of killing was first perfected on cattle [*sic*], and then applied to humans, we have not an obscene analogy, but an obscene piece of history (49).

The analogy has been put forward at its most basic level by Elisabeth Costello in Coetzee's novel, which Donna Haraway describes as "a common, powerful, and in my view powerfully wrong approach" (*When Species Meet*, 336n23). This is *not* to say, however, and as Haraway makes clear, "that the Nazi killings of the Jews and others and mass animal slaughter in the meat industry have no *relation* [emphasis mine]," but only that such an "analogy culminating in equation can blunt our alertness to irreducible difference and multiplicity and their demands. Different atrocities deserve their own language" (336n23). Carol Adams too, in rare agreement with Haraway, refuses the analogy on similar grounds, claiming that it rips "experience from its history" which thus "does harm to Holocaust survivors. We must locate our ethic for animals so that it does not hurt people who are oppressed" (*Neither Man Nor Beast*, 83). Finally, Susan Coe in *Dead Meat* (1996) notes that—

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<sup>116</sup> Heidegger's reference to the camps is quoted in the *Der Spiegel* interview "Only a god can save us" (23 September 1966), pub. *Der Spiegel* 31 May 1976. Reprinted in Gunther Neske & Emil Kettering (eds) *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism* (New York: Paragon House, 1996), 41-66.

My annoyance is exacerbated by the fact that the suffering I am witnessing now cannot exist on its own, it has to fall into the hierarchy of a “lesser animal suffering.” In the made-for-TV reality of American culture, the only acceptable genocide is historical. It’s comforting—it’s over. Twenty million murdered humans deserve to be more than a reference point. I am annoyed that I don’t have more power in communicating what I’ve seen apart from stuttering: “It’s like the Holocaust” (72)

The clear link between these critiques is not that the comparison is inaccurate or irrelevant, but rather that the positing of an analogical *equation* is inappropriate—on *both* sides—only insofar as it effaces the specific differences between them. However, *not* positing such an analogy can equally result in blindness. As Wood writes, “[i]f there is a worry that the distinctiveness of the human gets lost in such a comparison, there is an equal worry that the refusal of such analogies perpetuates our all-too-human blindness to the systematic violence we habitually inflict on other creatures” (*The Step Back*, 49).

In addition, such a critique of the trope of analogy in general (reasoning from parallel cases) fails to address the chance imperative of an improper *metonymy* holding open the place by which previously effaced singular differences actually come to make sense. It fails, that is to say, those forbidden, unheard-of phrasings explored throughout this thesis. It is just such a chance imperative which adds weight to Wood’s warning that the “expression may well provoke the very resistance it seeks to overcome, but the expression is not used unthinkingly, or irresponsibly” (49).

In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Derrida famously—and carefully—refers to “animal genocides” (26), with the proviso that, “concerning the figure of genocide, one should neither abuse nor acquit oneself [*ni abuser ni s’acquitter*] too quickly” (26, trans. modified). He then proceeds to compare the “monstrous” suffering undergone by nonhuman animals with that of the Shoah, albeit ensuring, with all he has written on the subject of the prefatory “as if,” that there can be no simple relation of identity or analogy:

As if, for example, instead of throwing a people into ovens and gas chambers [*dans des fours crématoires et dans des chambers à gaz*] (let’s say Nazi) doctors and geneticists had decided to organise the overproduction and overgeneration of Jews, gypsies, and homosexuals by means of artificial insemination, so that, being continually more numerous and better fed, they could be destined in always increasing numbers for the

same hell, that of the imposition of genetic experimentation, or extermination by gas or by fire. In the same abattoirs (26).

Here it is clear that Derrida is not proffering a simplistic, reductive analogy between the millions of Jews exterminated in the Nazi death camps and the billions of nonhuman animals slaughtered in the death camps of capitalism.

All this is, however, noted only by way of a contextualising preface. In fact, I would argue that the necessarily blunted edge of any posited comparison is neither the sole, nor even the main, cause of controversy.

To begin with, it must be understood that the term “Holocaust,” referring to the extermination of the Jews during the Nazi period (“the Shoah,” from *so-ah* meaning “devastation” or “catastrophe,” is the Jewish term), is itself a trope. At once analogical metaphor and euphemism (in the strong sense of a palliative), it is one which moreover remains controversial to this day. Giorgio Agamben has traced this figure, and indeed, its “essentially Christian” history, in a number of his texts, and offers a convincing argument as to the “irresponsible historiographical blindness” of its positing, a blindness and blinding concerned precisely with the question of *analogy* (*Homo Sacer*, 114). Arguing that the term “holocaust” (from the Greek *holocaustos*, signifying “completely burned”) is “from its inception anti-Semitic” and thus “intolerable” (*Remnants*, 31), Agamben notes how it marks an attempt “to establish a connection, however distant, between Auschwitz and the Biblical *olah* and between death in the gas chamber and the ‘complete devotion to sacred and superior motives’” (31).<sup>117</sup>

It is here that the figure of analogy is identified as the origin of its intolerability: “the term impl[ies] an unacceptable equation between crematoria and altars” (31). Indeed, with this “wish to lend a sacrificial aura to the extermination of the Jews by means of the term ‘Holocaust’” (*Homo Sacer*, 114), it becomes clear that the term is if anything more appropriate as a figure for the extermination of animals for consumption, whether by gods or by men, than it is for the Shoah. And again, in terms of the meaning of the original Greek term, it is the industrialised genocide of nonhuman animals which most befits the adjective *holocaustos*, echoed by the industrial slaughterer’s familiar boast (a boast already worn smooth with overuse in the Chicago stockyards of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) that they “use everything but the squeal.”

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<sup>117</sup> On this, see also Wood *The Step Back*, 50.

Returning to Agamben, the important and necessary desacralisation of the Shoah serves, as is well known, as the zero point—marked by the camp *Muselmann*—for his notion of “bare life.” Jews under Nazism, he writes, were constituted as “a flagrant case of *homo sacer* in the sense of a life that may be killed but not sacrificed” (114). Bare life is, moreover, only *actualised* in its putting to death, which is “neither capital punishment nor a sacrifice, but simply the actualisation of a mere ‘capacity to be killed’ inherent in the condition of the Jew as such” (114). There was, in other words, no “mad and giant holocaust” but rather only the actualisation, enacted only through extermination, of “mere” life, mere subsistence. That is, in being-killed “the Jew” is reconfigured as pure animal remains (“‘as lice,’ which is to say, as bare life” (114)), for which the mute *Muselmann* is the figure, the “staggering corpse” (Jean Améry) or “the living dead” (Wolfgang Sofsky) without the capacity to die, but only to be killed.

We can now begin to discern a more nuanced relation than a superficial equation marked by the phrasing “animal holocaust.” Under the Nazis, Jews are thus reproduced as walking dead flesh, a *related*, but nonetheless singular, transformation into “pure” corporeality, into bodily-shaped collections of dead zombie flesh ready to be disarticulated. Not into “meat,” however, as we have seen with the so-called “food” animals of the previous chapters, but into “mere” animal remains. In other words, by way of a structurally interrelated spectral disembodiment through mimetic displacement, we find here too the instrumentalised “walking ghosts” which reproduce a symbolic logic of oppression that ultimately serves to constitute subjugated beings who are precisely *deserving* of oppression. Not an analogy, therefore, but an inter- and intra-relation—a *founding reciprocity*.

Furthermore, the reciprocal relation of these singular historical genocides serves to highlight the specificity lacking in Agamben’s conception of “bare life.” As Andrew Benjamin clearly demonstrates, and in contrast to the “undifferentiated ontology” which founds Agamben’s “bare life,” such a reconfiguration always involves—

the violent imposition of identity. It is imposed in this way on Jews, thus underscoring the vacuity of the claim that such a position involves “bare life,” as though within such a life the particularity of being a Jew—that which prompted the figure’s work in the first place—was not itself already

marked out. In being there originally, that mark would always have been retained (*Of Jews and Animals*, 186-7).

It is this ineffaceable mark which calls to the guilt which, according to Primo Levi, must bear upon “almost all” the Germans of the Nazi period, precisely because they failed to bear witness to what they could not *not* witness. The question—a related, even an analogous question—turns in a circle: Why do the majority choose not to see, to turn away and to refuse to hear, let alone to touch, taste or smell, the contemporary maltreatment of animals if not because of an unremarked sense of guilt and shame? *An experience, in other words, that is the murmur of the always restrained yet retained mark of constitutive exclusion.* One recalls here Elisabeth Costello, who cannot not conceive of everyone but as “participants in a crime of stupefying proportions” (Coetzee *Elisabeth Costello*, 114). This brings us to yet another important aspect of the holocaust analogy: in “Thinking With Cats” (2004), David Wood argues that the posited relation is nonetheless—

wholly justified even if politically divisive. The reasons for this are deep, and *connected with the difficulty most of us have in coming to see that some social practices we take part in clear-headedly might be utterly contemptible.* This contrasts with our *shared* condemnation of all Nazi genocidal activity. The attempt to connect these events produces extreme reactions (215n37, emphasis added).

Here then, the impropriety of the metonymy “animal holocaust” discloses the sharing of community based upon the guilt of exclusion, and marked by a failure to witness that which cannot not be witnessed (this latter despite its euphemistic effacement in the concept of “meat,” an effacing figured by the sterile, plastic-wrapped tropes of flesh on supermarket shelves). In this, another sense of the phrasing “animal holocaust” is made manifest, its disconcealing power becoming evident when Primo Levi’s absence is articulated together with a dialogue between Jacques Derrida and Elisabeth Roudinesco entitled “Violence Against Animals.”

In the midst of this latter dialogue, Roudinesco professes an attachment to “the idea of a certain division between the animal and the human” (72). This “attachment” is, I believe, exactly what Derrida attempts to interrupt when, immediately prior to this statement of attachment (in response to a question about the apparent “excess” of prohibitions against cruelty), he asks Roudinesco what she would

do if she “were actually placed every day before the spectacle of this industrial slaughter” (71). Roudinesco replies somewhat brusquely,

I wouldn’t eat meat anymore, or I would live somewhere else. But I prefer not to see it, even though I know that this intolerable thing exists. I don’t think that the visibility of a situation allows one to know it better. Knowing is not the same as looking (71).

Derrida insists, however, that she consider the situation more deeply:

But if, every day, there passed before your eyes, slowly, without giving you time to be distracted, a truck filled with calves leaving the stable on its way to the slaughterhouse, would you be unable to eat meat for a long time? (71)

To which Roudinesco responds:

I would move away. But really, sometimes I believe that, in order to understand a situation better and to have the necessary distance, it is best not to be an eyewitness to it (72).

The point, of course, is that Roudinesco is *already* a witness, that it is not that she can choose *not* to witness, but rather that she can only choose not to be *a* witness to that which she cannot not witness—the sole form of guilt which, according to Levi, cannot be absolved. It is the guilt, in other words, of disavowal, of the refusal to bear witness to the trace which remains to interrupt every metaphysics, every oppressive structure of dependence-exclusion.

What Derrida’s questioning in fact draws attention to is the refusal of a possible encounter through the conserving safety of a theoretical separation within the calculability of moral, economic, or religious discourse. One which serves to double the separation on the ontological level. In this way, contemptible socioeconomic practices becomes habitually—academically—denoted as “intolerable,” and which in so doing are thus rendered tolerable insofar as the unremarked guilt is neatly and conveniently assuaged. In other words, that which cannot not be witnessed is safely displaced onto the level of everyday facts. Indeed, there is nothing more factual and everyday than what for Roudinesco is the apparent “*necessity* for industrial organisation in raising and slaughtering animals” (71).

By contrast, as we have already seen in the discussion of *Elizabeth Costello*, intolerability is precisely an injunction—never a choice—which displaces *this* bodying outside of the everyday and into the impossibility of continuing to be, and which is at once the affirmation of, and *attestation to*, the encounter. That which cannot be tolerated, that deafening blare of silent music from the furthest proximity, is never the tolerable-intolerable, but rather the most undeniable and the most material, that which can be no longer missed and not yet mis-taken.

### **Animal slavery and the guilt of humanism**

Finally in this chapter, we explore via the “unapologetic” humanism of Susan Buck-Morss’s latest project, the relation—perhaps analogical—to that other improper metonymy or “dreaded comparison”: that of “animal slavery.”

In *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (2009), Buck-Morss asserts an “undeniable political experience of guilt that we humans feel when witnessing something deeply wrong with the principles that govern our everyday world” (83). Here again, the question clearly concerns the relation of guilt and bearing witness, a witnessing which happens to a body before any possibility of choice and which, while it can indeed be spoken about, it cannot, however, “be known” insofar as it contradicts the “official order.” The “truth,” writes Buck-Morss, while “available to conscious perception, is at the same time ‘disavowed’” (83). As a result, this “experience of guilt,” an experience which for Buck-Morss presupposes the existence of universal moral truths, potentially places an individual in conflict with its community, and as such “entails being a traitor to the collective that claims you (through nation or class, religion or race [and, I would add, through *species*])” (83).

More than this, however, Buck-Morss claims that such “guilt has its source in the gap between reality and social fantasy, rather than between reality and individual fantasy. It can turn interpretative analysis into political critique by breaking the official silence that sanctions the wrong state of things” (83-4). Here, I argue, it is in fact the very espousal of an “unapologetically humanist project” of universal history (xi) which prevents Buck-Morss from engaging with the encounter which renders such guilt *undisavowable*—the guilt of humanism itself.



It is all too easy, Buck-Morss suggests, to share in the “moral outrage” over the way European Enlightenment philosophers responded to the ongoing systematic oppression that was slavery, and yet—

we cannot deny that a comparable moral outrage is occurring at this moment, one that future generations will find just as deplorable (this is our moral hope), the fact that political collectives proclaim themselves champions of human rights and the rule of law and then deny these to a whole list of enemy exceptions, as if humanity itself were the monopoly of their own privileged members—their war a just war, their terrorist acts a moral duty, their death and destruction legitimated by reason, or progress, or the divine (149).

As we have seen, Schmitt argues that the claim to a universal humanity is always a particularly brutal ruse of war, passing off a specific interest as universal. Indeed, the evocation of a universal concept is in a certain sense always a usurpation, given the impossibility of a presuppositionless position. What, for example, might be the criteria for identifying “humanity” without implying a whole determinate culture and, in this case, moving as it does via Hegel, an explicitly *Christian* culture? Irrespective of Buck-Morss’s attempts to evade its implication in focussing upon “the experience of historical rupture as a *moment* of clarity” (147), the claim to humanity is nonetheless always to proclaim *inhumanity*, and thus repeat inversely the denied humanity which the claim claims to reclaim.

In other words, Buck-Morss misunderstands that humanism *is* only insofar as it sets up a limit between the human and the animal. Such is the demand for line-drawing which humanism can never avoid, and which ever again finds that animalisation of the other which is the very condition for those political collectives she imagines her humanism will overcome, simply by its focus on the transitory. Without ever asking the question of the animal, Buck-Morss never questions the very conditions of humanism. As a result, and while she would no doubt refuse any claim to a universal (essentialist) race or gender, in positing a “new” humanism she in fact falls prey to that very thing for which she berates those Enlightenment philosophers. That is to say, to an absolute blindness to the slavery that literally exists all around her, and to the contradictions which remark our shared political guilt, a blindness which future, and indeed present, generations “will find just as deplorable” (although it is not a hope I

would define as *moral*). The irony of Buck-Morss's "unapologetically humanist project" is, in other words, the absence of the "contradictory guilt" of humanism itself.

## 9. Promise to Betray, Humanity

### Introduction

Previously, we encountered Nietzsche's insistence that any way of being that is cut off from, or that cuts itself off from, all radically other ways of being can only de-generate, insofar as it thus excludes itself from that which reserves the possibility of its own regeneration. Throughout this chapter, and in one form or another, I aim to read this claim again and again with the hope of gaining a deeper insight into what I am calling a "community beyond the human." With this in mind, I explore in the first sections the important notion of the *promise* as it is found in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887). In this, I argue that, for Nietzsche, to become animal, that is, to become an animal with the right to make promises, and with the right to constitute the *future* therefore, is to become a futural being beyond "the human," an *out-living* in and as an animal encounter which, moreover, is always already shared *with* other animals.

Recalling too the necessity of *giving death*—and thus both finitude and nonsubstitutability—to nonhuman animals, this will lead in the final section to a consideration of the centrality of death, and of finite negativity, to any thinking of a community beyond the human. Further engaging with texts by Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot, I attempt thus to approach that which Georges Bataille famously calls the "community of those who have no community"—that of an impossible community which marks an ineffaceable rupture within those paranoid theatres of death whose sole hysterical demand is the *a priori* absence of life.

From our earlier reading of Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lie," we recall that, in marking the originary porosity of being-with—this sharing of the proximal distance from the as such, and thus from each other and from the world—, a division is inscribed in and as language. Such is the division of finite beings imposed by a touch in which no limit, no separation, can be discerned, but rather only and habitually imposed. Responsible conduct for Nietzsche is thus the affirmation in the face of blind universals of that responsive touching—being-touched which, exceeding the transcendental, remains always to come—that is to say, is always unheard-of and yet already forbidden. We recall too that the Nietzschean individual neither lives nor exists, but

rather “is” only that which exceeds every determinable form, which *out-lives* [*über-leben*]: an overhuman demand which, still to come, thus withdraws from all recognition in and as a silent announcing which necessarily out-lives any enclosure of the properly “human.” As a result, responsible, affirmative (the two terms being synonymous) conduct is always a conducting towards the other, an abyssal mark and remark of being-in-common which, in a *creative* forgetting of being, holds the place of the impossible encounter in which something comes to be that which it is as such.

In following Nietzsche therefore, an originary being-with shared by all living beings prior to any making of sense is disclosed (albeit without, however, ever being able to draw a simple line between “living” and “non-living”). In short, being-with—the pure potentiality of being as such—bears its withdrawal *in* and *as* tropes marking a shared finitude. In this double movement of *in* and *as*—this double distancing that is at once the repeatability of language and the singularity of being-there—each is divided from, and shared with, every other.

Moreover, inasmuch as such ways of being in language—differential ways of being-with, of being-together as always already related in difference—can never be securely delimited, the spacing of ethical encounters which, in (re)inventing the new, constitute unrecognisable phrasings is thus reserved. Such phrasings, we recall, which only retain their inaugurating intensity insofar as they both no longer and not yet make sense, are no longer and not yet parodic. In opposition to the dominant legislation of value, and thus against the Law, such a phrasing manifests itself as a singular being, an individual *animal*. That is, as an (out)living being refusing to recognise the sense of the Law which functions to exclude the sense of its being and, who or which, in coming to being, thus betrays the map of its site of exclusion.

And yet, we must recall too from the first chapter that, according to Maurice Blanchot at least, “community” is nonetheless always and only human, inasmuch as becoming-human is the necessary condition of both community and communication (and if these terms are ever distinct). Finitude, writes Blanchot, is the distance that separates but which also prevents separation. Indeed. And yet, without death—undying and thus “merely” existing—nonhuman animals can be neither separate nor can their separation be prevented. Put in this way, one begins to wonder if perhaps these ontologically opposed ways of being are not in fact indistinguishable. For Blanchot, as we know, this vertiginous proximal distancing serves to displace nonhuman animals, negatively defined as the excluded who cannot be excluded. By contrast, I would

suggest that this uncanny reciprocity in fact describes *a community of those who share the incapacity to share*. In this way, Blanchot thus recalls us to a being-in-common which is at once prior to, and interruptive of, any “community service” and, indeed, of any *working* (in the sense given to the term by Nancy). This is, in short, the sharing of an impossible promise, which returns us once more to the Nietzschean *überanimal*.

### **Prehistorical mnemotechnics and the community of animals**

First of all, in the second essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche does *not*, as is often taken to be the case, define “Man” as the animal who promises. Being human, in other words, is not simply to be an animal with the additional ability to promise. Rather, writes Nietzsche, “To breed an animal *with the right to make promises*—is not this the paradoxical *task* that nature has set itself *in the case of man*?” (II:1, latter emphasizes mine). Such a task—a task, moreover, which remains outstanding—is not paradoxical insofar as it juxtaposes animal + promise, but rather because it identifies promise with *right*. In other words, the entire history of humankind, of “culture” traditionally conceived, is reducible to the preparation by “nature” (and recalling here Nietzsche’s ambivalent deconstruction of the nature-culture binary) for the coming of the animal, of the “emancipated individual,” who not merely promises, but rather possesses the “actual *right to make promises*.”

The ability to promise is thus not a property which marks out the human, but is rather that which marks “the human” as simply a prehistoric breeding project. Such is a production and a labour which, even *if we imagine* ourselves placed “at the end of this tremendous process” (and Nietzsche makes sure to mark that “if”), by no means marks its completion, the being with this right still not yet having arrived in the present. “Man” is the *prehistory* of this *right*, and thus, so long as there is “Man,” the task remains outstanding. How then, is this task to be done with, so as not to render “us” eternal dyspeptics?

This tremendous prehistory, perhaps “to a large extent” complete, that is, *if* “we” are at its end or are its end (and recalling too that the addressees of Nietzsche’s texts were always “the posthumous ones”), is, writes Nietzsche, the development of an “active desire” *not* to forget. This desire is in direct contrast to the strong force that is at once active forgetfulness and repression and which, permitting a being “to remain

undisturbed by the noise and struggle of our underworld of utility organs,” simultaneously constitutes the “present” *and* “makes room” for the new. In short, the entire prehistory that is “Man” is the opposing desire “not to rid oneself, a desire for the continuance of something desired once, a real *memory of the will*” and thus, with the “I shall,” the memory of the future (II:1).

Here, it should be noted, such a “willing” is not a “real” willing—“there is no will,” as Nietzsche writes in *The Will to Power*, but rather only precision or oscillation (§46), only quanta of *force* (*Genealogy*, I:13)—, but rather a real *memory* of the will, a memory which, as with every memory, is habitually untrue, that is, a fiction or a fable. With this fiction of the will, we are thus recalled to Nietzsche’s famous assertion that “‘the doer’ is merely a fiction added to the deed” (I:13). For Nietzsche then, there is no “subject,” whether “substratum” or “soul,” which is in fact simply a result of “the misleading influence of language” (I:13). Consequently, it becomes necessary to rethink, and to revalue, what Nietzsche might mean when he writes of an “emancipated” and “sovereign” individual.

The opposing desire, the death-drive to remember, to repeat, is the *pre-condition* of history, of the emancipated individual with the right to make promises who, perhaps even now at the end of the process, is yet to come, yet to completely arrive in the present constituted by forgetting. Repetition, in short, is thus the precondition of the new, of the animal with the right to promise. The human is this precondition, moreover, only because the way of being human is memory, is *mnemotechnics*. That is to say, the ability “in general [to] be able to calculate and compute,” the development of which there is “perhaps ... nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man [i.e., in the prehistory that is man]” (II:3). Fearful and uncanny it may be, but the task of breeding an animal with the right to make promises, that is, of an animal whose way of being consists of the “*right to affirm oneself*” and thus the capacity to rightfully “stand security for *his [sic] own future*,” nevertheless necessarily “embraces and presupposes ... that one first *makes* men to a certain degree necessary, uniform, like among like, regular, and consequently calculable” (II:3). Hence, with the aid of morality and a “social straitjacket,” “Man” is thus *produced*.

Indeed, Nietzsche continues, all the solemnity and seriousness of “man” is merely a holdover of “the terror that formerly attended all promises, pledges, and vows,” merely the gloomy stain of a prehistory which, insofar as it is necessarily that

which “we humans” *as* humans can never move beyond, is therefore “*still effective*” (II:3).

This development of the memory is thus a prehistoric preface, an overcoming of forgetfulness in imposing the “demands of social existence as *present realities*” (II:3) on the way to the emancipated individual. A mere preliminary to the coming of an out- or over-animal whose right to make promises is the liberation from custom and morality, and which, no longer prefatory, is thus free to *make* history. The *übermensch* then, as we saw in the reading of “On Truth and Lie,” is this animal movement beyond “the human.” An overcoming of habit and convention held, and held to, by the memory of the (imaginary) will, moving thus beyond the Platonic virtues of immutability, beyond the “vast overrating” of the “virtue” of conviction (*Human, All Too Human*, §629).

One thinks here of Zarathustra’s famous metaphor of “Man” as the rope between “animal” and “overhuman” (“Prologue,” 4). The rope in this reading is thus the memory of the will, of a mnemotechnics which, forever linking the singular body to the possibility of invention, forgets to forget in the compulsive desire to repeat. This figure does not, however, mark a dialectical humanist *tēlos* resulting in a superhuman sublation, that is, in the negation of the negation of the animal. While Nietzsche is indeed concerned with the specific mnemotechnicity which marks the way of being-human, this is by no means to refuse to *nonhuman* animals other ways of being-mnemotechnical. Rather, as we have seen with Nietzsche’s gnat metaphysician, they too are similarly doubly-displaced in metaphor, and thus “in” memory:

The whole organic world is the weaving together of beings, each with their little imaginary world around themselves: their force, their lust, their habits are found in their experiences, projected as their *outside world*. The ability [*Fähigkeit*] for creation (formation, invention, imagination) is their fundamental capacity: of themselves, these beings have, of course, *likewise* [my emphasis] only an erroneous, imaginary, simplified representation. “A being with the habit of ordering in dreaming”—that is a living being. Immense amounts of such habits have finally become so solid, that *species* live in accordance with these orders (Nietzsche *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 11:34; cit. Lemm, 25).

The metaphor of “the animal” must thus be understood as a figure of the impossible state of being prior to mnemotechnics, that is, of being prior to habit by which a being comes to be. By contrast, “the human” is the privileged figure of the anoriginal

sedimentation of language, of the taking place which has always already *taken* place. Hence, neither “Animal” nor “Man” has the *right* to make promises. Moreover, in relation to the specific question under consideration here—that of the community beyond the human—what might be called “the community of animals” is thus a network of pure singularities prior to any determination, and thus prior to any “community” in the sense of the habitually imposed demands of social existence. “The animal” refers not to living beings therefore, but is rather a *figure* of that which can precisely take no figure, the taking place which withdraws in always already having taken place, and which marks every living being “with the habit of ordering in dreaming.”

### **Traitor to Humanity, Universally: Nietzsche**

The outliving of “the human,” that is, of habit, the inability not to forget, concerns, as we have seen, the right to promise on the one hand, and the “*one*” whose task of breeding this is, on the other. To begin with, the *right* to promise demands that the promise, insofar as it is a promise, *takes time*. Hence, it must not be given lightly, but rather “reluctantly, rarely, slowly,” as its time to come requires the sufficient strength to maintain its coming into being come what may, that is, “in the face of accidents, even ‘in the face of fate’” (II:2). The right to make promises, in short, demands an unwavering fidelity to that which remains to come, and which Nietzsche describes as “the extraordinary privilege of *responsibility*” (II:2).<sup>118</sup>

Paradoxically, however, such a promise, such responsibility must, as we shall see, already be a *betrayal*, its nobility that of the traitor and its responsibility that of the capricious wanderer. The right to make promises, in other words, demands that the promise *must* be betrayed, and thus we must all be traitors to humanity, or rather, to its concept or, even better, its *figure*. The Law of humanity then, *must* be broken—this is the law before the Law. And yet, how might this *überhuman right* to promise which is the betrayal of that promise be understood?

For this, the final chapter of Avital Ronell’s *The Test Drive* (2005) in which she discusses the Nietzsche-Wagner break-up proves invaluable. As Ronell makes

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<sup>118</sup> Nietzschean mutability, as a result, thus contrasts with the *calculable* innovation of speculative capital, as we will see in the final chapter.



clear, to promise is, like the positing of universals, to be blinded by, and blind to, an excessive obligation, that is, “to an oppression that locks in the future: [thus] the promise portends madness” (312). In other words, and as Nietzsche suggests in section 629 of *Human, All Too Human*, the structural excess of the promise is thus the *madness* of fidelity which, insofar as it is blind to the tragedy of finitude—to “the face of fate”—in fact serves to render every promise conditional. The non-sense of the promise, the *insensé* of unconditionality, is in this way withdrawn in its actualisation: the excessive, gruesome night of its taking place always already effaced by the sober light of day of its having taken place.

In one sense then, as Ronell writes, “Nietzsche sets up the promise in such a way as to let us escape its imperial purchase” (*The Test Drive*, 312). On the other hand, however, the *right* to make promises can, by contrast, only be the strength to face finitude, to face the face of fate—not as its master or in some Heideggerian sense of an authentic appropriation of being-towards-death, but in remaining faithful to the maddening displacement of its demand from the other. To face both the unconditional and the inadequacy of every response is, in other words, a responsibility to the infinite excess that is the unconditional, and which can thus only betray itself.<sup>119</sup>

However, in order to understand why the *right* to make promises must break with the *memory* of the impossible will, in that the prehistoricity of the latter is overcome by the former’s inauguration of history, two things need to be noted. Firstly, that *every* utterance, that is, every making of sense, is *already* a promise, and thus always sundered by the excess of its demand. As Derrida writes,

The performative of this promise is not one speech act among others. It is implied by any other performative, and this promise heralds the uniqueness of language to come. It is the “there must be a language” ..., “I promise a language,” “a language is promised,” which at once precedes all language, summons all speech and already belongs to each language as it does to all speech (*Monolingualism*, 67).

Here then, we see that the structural excess of the promise renders explicit the movement of *sense* already explored in the earlier reading of Nietzsche: the infinite promise is the *taking* place of language which has always already withdrawn in its finite having *taken* place. Secondly, this constitutive “in difference with itself” ensures

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<sup>119</sup> On this, see Ansell Pearson’s excellent *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), 27-8.

that “the fatal precipitation of the promise must be dissociated from the values of the will, intention, or meaning-to-say that are reasonably attached to it” (67). In fact, the ubiquity of the promise and its dissociation from the will are indissociable, insofar as the taking place of the mark necessarily exceeds every semantic intention. This is not to say that every such mark, as Werner Hamacher makes clear, is “thereby disburdened of its semantic gravitation” (“Lectio,” 196). Rather, “[n]o text has the power to exclude the possibility that it says the truth, or at least something true; but no text can guarantee this truth because every attempt to secure it must proliferate the indeterminacy of its meaning” (196). In other words, every promise—as an act of will—inevitably exceeds its own performance, making of it necessarily a mis-promise.

We can now better understand Ronell’s assertion that for Nietzsche the promise necessarily “entails the act of *versprechen*, which means both mis-speaking and promising” (*Test Drive*, 312). More than this, however, it follows that the emancipated individual, the animal with the right to make promises, is thus a being with *the right to mis-mark*, that is, to rightfully mark improperly, to *revalue*, in contrast to the simple mis-speaking of those “feeble windbags who promise without the right to so do” (Nietzsche *Genealogy*, II:2).

Moreover, the Nietzschean “individual”—that which, as we have seen, outlives itself in improperly remarking the unheard-of and yet already forbidden—is “emancipated” only in relation to the limit imposed upon what counts, what *makes* sense, within a given state of affairs. The sovereignty of the individual is, in short, always *posthumous*, insofar as it out-lives all recognised sense and thus value. The *right* to make promises therefore demands a response and a responsibility to betray every custom and every moral, to be a traitor to every firmly held belief.

Such a right, moreover, entails the strength to remain faithful to this nomadism, to the vigilance of this wandering, which is to remain loyal and response-able to the being-in-common. That is, to the community of others which we share and which shares us in the not-being-able to share, in not-being-able to fuse the more-than-one in One. In and as the memory of the “I shall” which already congeals into habit and thus refuses forgetting, and which constitutes our being-shared in and across language, the willing subject *shatters* in its being already exposed in-common. *Such a community, in other words, of traitors who affirm and betray in common.* As we have seen, hospitality is exactly this: an affirmation which interrupts every social convention

and every duty to the *socius*, an unrecognisable, incalculable decision without sovereignty whose every actualisation betrays hospitality as such.

This has profound consequences for a reading of Nietzsche's "animal with the right to make promises" as the completion of prehistory in the coming to be of the *human*, or even of the superhuman. If the right to make promises promises at the same time to make history, then the strength to hold faithfully to an unending betrayal of the dominant rule becomes the rule: this is the individual's promise and right to break every promise, every contract, every calculation.

No – there is no law, no obligation of that kind; we must become traitors, act unfaithfully, forsake our ideals again and again. We do not pass from one period of life to another without causing these pains of betrayal, and without suffering from them in turn (*Human, All Too Human*, §261).

If the right to make promises overcomes or outlives the prehistory that is at one and the same time "the human" and the development of a phantasmatic memory of the will, then this promise that is humanity must in its turn be overcome, must be broken. As animals, we must overcome the memory which prepares for, without arriving, the appearance of universal "humanity." Such is the demand and a promise which calls forth a common betrayal of "humanity" or, rather, of its *concept*.

The law of humanity, of its memory of the will which produces the uniform calculable subject is that which, in other words, *must* be broken in a being-common and a being-in-common of singularities. As Ronell writes, if we are to pass to another stage of life, "our relation to the promise needs to be a broken one. The promise can be counted on only to enforce its breakability" (*The Test Drive*, 313). Moreover, she continues, referring to the above citation from *Human, All Too Human*, the diacritical mark following the initial negation "can be read as an absence of a link, operating simultaneously as severance and connector: No, dash, there is no law. In a place where no law is asserted to stand, he posits law" (313). To outlive the human, for Nietzsche, is thus to betray humanity, to cease to *be* human in becoming otherwise. Only here do we at last approach the completion, the ends, of "the human." Only in this way will the community beyond the human, a community shared by all living beings (which is not to say "living" *organisms*), have arrived: a community of the impossible *perhaps* which only comes to be *with* every other animal, a community whose chance of becoming inheres in its being exposed and disposed with others.

The extended consideration of the “human community” in this part sheds further light upon what Derrida describes as “democracy to-come [*a-venir*].” In deconstructing “the essential link of a certain concept of democracy to autochthony and to eugenics” (*Politics of Friendship*, 110n25), such a thinking, Derrida writes, thus excludes it from the phantasm or fiction of a genealogical tie which is always only ever “posed, constructed, induced, [which] always implies a symbolic effect of discourse” (93). In so doing, it “confide[s] it to or open[s] it to another memory, another immemoriality, another history, another future” (111n25). To exclude community from the fiction of immanence and immunity, from the appeal to birth, to nature, to nation, and to universal humanity, is thus to move beyond the human, and thus beyond the bad dream of “a *determined politics*” (93).

In contrast to an all too common *ressentiment* which says No to what is “outside,” to what is “different,” the opening to another memory and another immemoriality calls to a community that can only ever be *posthumous*, the mark of which “is” to suffer the agonies of outliving. Thus, writes Nietzsche, “the more a present-day individual determines the future, the more he will suffer” (*Will to Power*, §686). To outlive our walking ghosts, to live on in the tragedy of our shared finitude and thus to refuse the living death of zombie slaves, “I” must therefore “die several times while still alive” (*Ecce Homo*, §5 on *Zarathustra*). Loyalty and responsibility demands that, as living beings, we must always again turn against the self-congratulatory “purity” of *ressentiment*. Must always again turn against the suicidal machines of immanent-immunity which, having *cut itself off from itself* in cutting itself off from all radically other ways of being, can thus only ever turn against itself, can only extirpate itself. This latter, as we have seen, necessarily degenerates, having excluded itself from that which reserves the possibility of its regeneration: such is the compulsive suiciding of gated, bounded communities.

In the end then, it is no surprise that, in a no longer extant preface to *The Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche affirms that “the individual”—this being with the right to promise—is recognised, marked out, by a creative relation to nonhuman others: “*His love of animals*—men have always recognised the solitary by means of this trait” (cit. in Heidegger *Nietzsche*, II:45).

## Meeting Our Solitude: Making Friends

In contrast to the bad dream of a *determined* politics then, such a *posthumous community is, in common with the human being, a singular bodying which is neither nameable nor substantial*. It is, in short, *undetermined*. To name a community, for example, is necessarily to determine a community in opposition to another, and it is for this reason that Alain Badiou calls the community and the collective “the unnameables of political truth,” insofar as “every attempt ‘politically’ to name a community induces a disastrous Evil ... to force the naming of the unnameable. Such, exactly, is the principle of disaster” (*Ethics*, 86).<sup>120</sup> Hence, an infinite community—that is, being *as such*—can neither *be*, nor *be named*, but rather, inasmuch as it is beyond completion and incompleteness, can only and always have already withdrawn. A withdrawal which is, moreover, its *demand*. As Maurice Blanchot writes,

There it is: something had taken place which, for a few moments and due to the misunderstandings peculiar to singular existences, gave permission to recognise the possibility of a community established previously though at the same time already posthumous: nothing of it would remain, which saddened the heart while also exalting it, like the very ordeal of effacement writing demands (*The Unavowable Community*, 21).

While it is indeed the case that nothing of this *community* would remain, at the same time, however, the *trace* of this community remains. It is its *demand*, in other words, which remains, that of “the very ordeal of effacement” imposed by writing by the taking place of spacing having always already taken place. Demanding a response, demanding responsibility, its withdrawal is nothing less than an injunction of existence: the imperative to give place to, and to be given place by, that which is refused sense within a given “community affect.” Such is the place out of place of a shared *commonality*, understood as *sharing in the politicisation of the individual ethical demand*.

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<sup>120</sup> According to Badiou’s theory of the subject, however, nonhuman animals are necessarily condemned to an *eternal* oppression for which redress is neither possible nor sought. This follows from Badiou’s claim that oppression is never to be fought against, but rather is always and only a *consequence* of an appearing of a human subject of truth. See *Logics of Worlds*, 60ff.

Sharing comes down to this: what community reveals to me ... is my existence outside myself. Which does not mean my existence reinvested in or by community, as if community were another subject that would sublimate me, in a dialectical or communal mode. *Community does not sublimate the finitude it exposes. Community itself, in sum, is nothing but this exposition.* It is the community of finite beings, and as such it is itself a *finite* community. In other words, not a limited community as opposed to an infinite or absolute community, but a community *of* finitude, because finitude “is” communitarian, and because finitude alone is communitarian (Nancy *The Inoperative Community*, 26-7).

Given death, a giving finitude, nonhuman animals must thus take part, ek-sist, only in exposing themselves in and as this community of finitude. Community “is” the sharing that is being as such, without memory and without forgetting, beyond completion and incompleteness. As we learned in chapter three, its ethical injunction interpellates other beings who come to be in sharing the disorientating call of its encounter which, only insofar as it remains unnameable, that is, only insofar as it no longer and not yet makes sense, resonates in the clothes of an improper phrasing. Thus is constituted a nonreactive affirmative micropolitics which, tracing a community to come, opens a potential emergent trajectory of escape that is the redoubled space of *respond-ability*: the excessive recursivity between concept and singular experience, between the deafness of a given state of affairs and the inaudible clamour of *infinite* community.

In summary then, “community”—infinite ethos, unconditional hospitality—is that which must withdraw in the opening of the finite space of politics. In withdrawing, its trace of displacement composes the senseless ethical demand, calling forth the placeholding phrasing that is political nomination, a nomination which presupposes neither identity, nor substance, nor proper meaning.<sup>121</sup>

Here, we at last approach the sense of “community beyond the human,” of a community of finite beings always already beyond “the human.” Such a community affirms itself only in its withdrawal in and as the political, and in so doing it interrupts the phantasmatic effect of every genealogical tie and silences the everyday mis-speaking of those “feeble windbags who promise without the right to so do” (Nietzsche *Genealogy*, II:2). It is *community* which, in *withdrawing*, “is” the distance that separates, or rather *spaces*—i.e. finitude, or the shared incapacity to share—but

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<sup>121</sup> The *political*, writes Nancy, designates “the disposition of community as such” (*The Inoperative Community*, 40). In this, we can understand why the political is always communist, but not necessarily communist politics.

which also *prevents* separation in the trace of its withdrawal, marking the irreducible porosity that is exposition. It is this which gives us to understand the Nietzschean community of solitary friends as an announcing of those who, as Derrida writes,

love in separation. The invitation comes to you from those who can *love only at a distance, in separation* [*qui n'aiment qu'à se séparer au loin*]. This is not all they love, but they love; they love lovence, they love to love—in love or in friendship—providing there is this withdrawal. Those who love only in cutting ties are the uncompromising friends of solitary singularity. They invite you to enter into this community of social disaggregation [*déliaison*]' (*Politics of Friendship*, 35-6).

We are now in a position to define this “community without limit” as an infinite commonality of singularities which shares and in which is shared all finite living beings. Hence, to affirm the community of separation, of withdrawal, is to love without limit in the greatest possible proximity: that is, in sharing the inability to share, in sharing an unbridgeable displacement from immanence, in sharing the withdrawal of community, in sharing the demand of an impossible hospitality, and in sharing the ethical demand which opens the space of the political.

Such a community of separation thus stands in direct contrast to the exclusion by which the man of *ressentiment* figures the other as “evil” and thence himself as “good,” a division which, insofar as it depends upon exclusion, necessarily degenerates. Rather, it is only in the withdrawal of community that can be found, in Blanchot’s words, “the friendship that discovers the unknown we ourselves are, and the meeting of our own solitude which, precisely, we cannot be alone to experience (‘incapable, by myself alone, of going to the limits of the extreme’)” (*The Unavowable Community*, 25). Only in this way might “crimes against the human *status*” become impossible, having rendered inoperative, *unworking*, the greasy workings of the brutalising machineries of animalisation which serve to render “brutes” on both sides of the imaginary division.

Betrayal then, is the very condition of community, and thus paradoxically of vigilance, responsibility, and loyalty. A betrayal which, exemplified by Kafka’s Investigator, takes the figure of a nomadic animal, of a lone wanderer ever seeking community and commonality. Such is the futural being who or which bears the strength to outlive “the human.” Such fidelity, I propose, must hold itself to a giving

finitude which, in bearing witness, responds to the nonsubstitutable deaths of living beings in re-marking the shared proximal distance that is being-with.

So it is that here too we find the disjunctive space of the phrasing “animal holocaust”: for friends of a community beyond the human, there can be neither death camp nor slaughterhouse, and it is to the slaughterhouse, to the degenerate basement of capitalism, which we turn in the final chapter. There, I will further explore the notion of the promise and mutability, revisiting along the way various arguments from earlier chapters, in considering the increasing centrality of biotechnology to so-called “post-Fordist” capitalism.

By way of yet another reading of “animal holocaust,” here recapitulated in the short form of a fable, let us conclude this part however, although still in the context of both the slaughterhouse and the laboratory, by briefly recalling Bobby. Bobby was the name given to the dog who recognised, despite the enforced degradation which marked so-called “life” in the camps, the “humanness” of a group of Jewish POWs in Nazi Germany, a group which included philosopher Emmanuel Levinas among their number. The “free” men who gave the orders, as well as the children and women who passed by and sometimes raised their eyes, recalls Levinas, “stripped us of our human skin,” that is to say, stripped them of their recognisable human status, thus rendering them “subhuman, a gang of apes” (“Name of a Dog,” 48). Bobby—the “last Kantian in Nazi Germany” who, “unable to universalise maxims and drives” and thus no Kantian at all—was not fooled however: “For him, there was no doubt that we were men” (49).

In the holocaust of animalisation, therefore, in which the skin is stripped both metaphorically and literally from the bodies of Jews, only this singular way of being-dog amid the determined territory and determining theatre of war, only this nonsubstitutable dog to whom these men give the proper name “Bobby,” could, in the mutual recognition of their ways of being, in turn return to these bodyings their human skin.



## Part Five: Bio/Capital

### 10. Capital After Life and Life After Capital Transhumanism, Posthumanism, and the Pharmacology of the Promise

Sadism is about the structure of scientific vision, in which the body becomes a rhetoric, a “persuasive” language linked to social practice.

Donna J. Haraway *Primate Visions*

#### Introduction

In *The Jungle* (1906), a novelistic exposé of exploitative working practices in the Chicago stockyards at the beginning of the twentieth century, Upton Sinclair describes the industrialisation of “meat” as “the spirit of Capitalism made flesh” (376-7). A century later, however, it would be more accurate to say that the spirit of Capitalism promises to *transcend* all flesh, even as animal bodies are exploited and consumed ever more intensely. This shift within agribusiness is in fact symptomatic of the much broader transformation undergone by capitalism in recent decades. A shift which is at once both discontinuous with, and yet dependent upon, the industrial capitalism it nonetheless claims to leave behind.

In particular, the shifting site of the slaughterhouse (which I am using here as a general term to refer to the large disassembly factories in which living nonhuman animals are killed, disarticulated, and transformed into “meat,” be that as “cuts,” offal, pastes, etc., and other component parts such as skin, eyes, teeth, hair, and bone, as well as into “by-products” such as glue, gelatine, fertiliser, and so on) offers a particularly compelling example of both the discontinuity of “postindustrial” capitalism as well as its continuing dependence upon an increasingly marginalised industrial underbelly. One immediate way to perceive this is through the changing ways the slaughterhouse in the West is framed for, and consumed by, the public gaze. In Sinclair’s day, slaughterhouses offered popular tours in which a “visceral, affective response ... [was] arguably integral to the spectacle of slaughter” (Shukin *Animal Capital*, 95). Should an American “socialist whistleblower” publish such a book today, however, she might

well, as a result of the USA PATRIOT ACT (2001) and its successors, end up having to defend herself in court against a charge of domestic terrorism. While I will return to this shortly, for the moment I just want to suggest that “new” postindustrial capital intersects with the “old” industrial capital most explicitly in the penetration of animal bodies—human as well as nonhuman.

Prophetically defined by Marx as “the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself” (*Capital*, III:569), the contemporary transformation of capitalism has since been marked in a variety of ways—as the movement from Fordism to post-Fordism, from disciplinary societies to societies of control, from national industries to trans- and multinational corporations, from commodity capital to “fictitious” or speculative capital, from geophysical colonialism to economic neocolonialism, and from petrochemical to biospheric modes of accumulation. To this list I would also add the movement from stockyards and packingtowns to factory farms and so-called “pharm” animals, of which a transgenic sheep named Polly, albeit less famous than her kin Dolly, is still the best-known example. Finally, as we will see, this historical shift is also a shift in the conception of *time* itself.

A less immediate, but perhaps more significant way of tracing this shift is through the transformed notion of reproduction itself. It is, of course, by no means incidental that control over the reproduction of bodies—of nonhuman animals, of human and nonhuman workers, and of capital itself—finds one of its most contentious sites in the female gendered body of the nonhuman animal. It is here, for example, that we find the figure of Dolly, the first cloned sheep who, born in June 1996, was scientifically “fathered” by human males by way of her “parent” company PPL therapeutics. As we will see, Dolly’s emergence similarly marks the transformation of capitalist relations as well as their continuing dependence upon the industrial mode of production. On the one hand, one of the aims of the Dolly “experiment” was to show that her “natural” (i.e., germinal) ability to reproduce could be bypassed in favour of a more efficient (i.e., patriarchal) means of reproduction. Indeed, it is here that cloning crosses most clearly with slavery insofar, as Sarah Franklin notes, they share “this recognition of the shame and disempowerment that occasions the loss of reproductive power” (“Dolly’s Body,” 355). On the other hand, however, it remains essential that Dolly should continue to produce spring lambs who are perceived as “natural” in every sense, thus serving, *inter alia*, to ensure that cloning would not thereby deny

postindustrial capitalism of its slaughterhouses. Furthermore, it is here, inscribed in the consumable flesh of Dolly's offspring, that I locate the danger of an incomplete or, rather, a *stalled* deconstruction of the nature-culture dichotomy—a deconstruction traced throughout this thesis as quite literally the “grounding” question of “the animal.”

The “post” of *post*-industrialism or *post*-Fordism is thus in a strict sense a misnomer, yet it remains a very productive one insofar as it further marginalises contemporaneous industrial modes of production as therefore “primitive” or “backward.” This, I suggest, is experienced most clearly by those who find themselves ground under the wheels of agribusiness “wet work.” Indeed, the biotechnological revolution—the flagship of postindustrial capitalism—both demands and effaces an ever increasing exploitation, alienation, and consumption of both factory workers and factory animals. Moreover, in the process, the distinction between the two becomes increasingly blurred.

At the same time, however, the transformation marked by the “post” is in another sense absolutely discontinuous with industrial production, a sense which must be understood as a shift from the conditioned to the unconditioned. A shift, that is to say, from a determined linear temporality (exemplified somewhat ironically by the slaughterhouse *disassembly* line) to an undetermined, *pharmacological* movement of reversibility and “recapacitation.” By “pharmacological,” I am here following both Derrida and Bernard Stiegler to denote that which structurally reserves for itself the function of both remedy and poison at once. The pharmacological, therefore, is always already both promise and threat. Here, it will be shown, this rupturing of linear determinism not only interrupts traditional notions of patriarchy and genealogical descent with the promise of a material “transhuman” immortality, but also interrupts any possible recourse to the all too familiar response-reaction dichotomy so often employed to exclude nonhuman animals.

This is not to say, however, that postindustrial “biocapitalism” is therefore more responsive as far as actual, nonsubstitutable nonhuman animals are concerned. Rather, we find instead that “the animal” is once again represented—albeit in a transformed and indeed, *patentable* sense—as both pathic and undying, and thus excluded from the shared concerns of finitude. This results from the fact that the promise of biotechnology remains dependent upon a rhetoric of genetic determinism, both for its moral justification and in order to efface the threat of its necessary

*indeterminism*. Nevertheless, what Dolly demonstrates is precisely the impossibility of biological determinism insofar as, at both the cellular and the organismic level, she interrupts, and even reverses, the arrow of time in what is, I argue, *a writing of and on the body*, and which as such is necessarily subject to dissemination. It is this which allows us to better engage with Stiegler's ongoing attempt to reinstall a secure human-animal distinction through an exploration of the notion of "life always already freed from life." Here, I will argue that, insofar as human psychotechnics cannot in fact be separated from what Stiegler calls "animal vigilance," this necessarily renders inoperative the very human-animal distinction which serves to ground Stiegler's promise of a technical remedy to the poison of technology.

By virtue of a reworked notion of Stiegler's core concept of "epiphylogenesis," however, I will argue that the "new" science of biotechnology nonetheless produces new possibilities for interrupting the sadistic reduction of nonhuman animals to reactive machinery, as well as the very rhetoric of genetic determinism required for their biotechnological capitalisation in the first place. Finally, by way of the dispersed temporality of promissory capital, I will conclude this thesis by exploring the notion of biotechnology as a redoubled pharmakon of *excessive mutability*, allowing me in turn to draw together the various threads of my argument. Thus, on one hand excessive mutability provides the promised remedy of an immortal transhumanist assemblage *and* the poisonous threat of life-consuming zoonoses. On the other, however, it promises both a posthumanism of vigilant betrayal *and* at once threatens always to collapse into the poison of absolute nihilism. Moreover, these two positions are diametrically opposed: the remedy of Nietzschean betrayal is the poison of the transhuman, just as the transhuman curative is the poison of posthumanism.

### **Marginalisation and the industrial underbelly**

In "Postscript on the Societies of Control" (1990), Gilles Deleuze, following Michel Foucault, offers a broad sketch of the key markers of the shift from "disciplinary societies" to "societies of control." Whereas disciplinary societies, evidenced by the standardisation imposed by large-scale industry, institute a "capitalism of concentration, for production and for property," societies of control rather constitute "essentially dispersive" circuits which are "continuous and without limit" (6). Thus,

writes Deleuze, in the disciplinary period, the enclosing of space and the Taylorist disciplining of time and motion finds its exemplary figures in the factory and the prison, whereas control societies by contrast are characterised by an open-ended rhizomatic network populated by “undulatory” orbiting subjects always in debt and dominated by corporations (6).<sup>122</sup>

However, Deleuze is right to emphasise the fact that, in his analyses of the disciplinary societies which constitute the industrialising period of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth-centuries, Foucault nevertheless insists on the uneven and gradual transition from one order to another. The emergence of disciplinary societies, in other words, constitutes but one historical epoch, both subsequent to, and overlapping with, earlier “societies of sovereignty,” and prior to, and overlapping with, the “societies of control” instituted following World War II. There is, therefore, no abrupt discontinuity of such epochs, but rather an always uneven topography of transition. Despite this, Deleuze nevertheless goes on to assert that, even while Foucault was writing, “a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were” (3). By contrast, the multiply-penetrated bodies of nonhuman animals serve today to explicitly demonstrate both the continuing overlap, and the mutual dependence of, the two later orders or modalities—an overlap that tends broadly to coalesce along the global North/South divide. The financialisation of postindustrial capitalism is, in short, both supported and constrained by an increasingly marginalised industrial mode of production.

Industrial capitalism is itself characterised by two distinct yet continuous stages. Firstly, there is the large-scale division of labour that institutes *manufacture* and which, in the process, “mutilates the worker, turning him [*sic*] into a fragment of himself” (Marx *Capital*, I:482). In the place of specialised knowledge, in other words, all that is required of the worker is the endless automatic repetition of a single simple task. Secondly, *industrial* capitalism comes into being when, in addition to the division of labour, the application of machines for producing surplus value further reduce workers to mere “organs” in the service of “a productive mechanism” (457). In manufacture, labour was thus for the first time concentrated or assembled in one place *at the same time* as the workers themselves were disassembled or, better, *disarticulated*

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<sup>122</sup> In this context, see also Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri’s *Empire* (2000) on the shift from the hegemony of material labour to that of *immaterial* labour, exemplified by the reproduction of affect common to both the entertainment and service industries.

in every sense. Thereafter, with the introduction of industrial machinery, workers were increasingly reduced to simple organic—yet infinitely reproducible and substitutable—parts of the great machinery, both literal and symbolic, of capitalist reproduction. To this we can further add the institution of the assembly line in the Ford automobile factories of the early twentieth-century, which can be considered as an intensification—in the sense of both increased productivity and increased fragmentation and evisceration—of both of these processes, the product as well as the worker being rationalised and standardised.

The fact that it was the slaughterhouse which, with its literal as well as figural fragmentation and evisceration, so fittingly provided the model for Fordism helps us to understand the *co-constitutive* reduction of human *and* nonhuman animals to “mere” organs. A co-constitution, that is to say, formed by their interpenetration as fragments of “merely” living flesh, and by their consumption for profit. This can be seen, for example, in the largely overlapping discourses supporting economic neocolonialism (as described below) on the one hand, and the exclusion of the foreign in the Same on the other (as explored in part four). Moreover, it is not by chance that it is within the windowless walls of Western slaughterhouses and “meat”-packing factories that, more than anywhere else today (or at least more explicitly, if that term can be used to refer to something systematically hidden), the apparently outmoded forms of a capitalism of enclosure are maintained right alongside, and meshing with, the most futural informatic and control networks, exemplified by both the transnational giants of agribusiness and the so-called “pharm” animals of biotechnology. In this way, while all the excesses of the industrial period are retained within the slaughterhouse, agribusiness *production* is nonetheless thoroughly postindustrial, depending as it does upon venture capital and stock market investment, rather than vice versa.

This apparent contradiction of transition is perhaps most clearly evident in the neocolonialism underwriting so much of the so-called “Green Revolution.” Beginning in the 1960s, wealthy countries of the North used economic and legislative power to force farmers in poorer countries such as India, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil to maximise acreage productivity by planting monoculture cash crops such as soybeans and corn for export (the former almost entirely used to feed “livestock” in the EU, China, and the US). This in turn required the importing of high-priced pesticides, herbicides, and chemical-based and petroleum-driven fertilisers from the North at the cost of a spiralling debt and dependency. Similarly, throughout the 1970s and beyond,

the US and the World Bank only offered loans to countries such as Mexico, Nicaragua and Costa Rica on the condition that huge areas of rainforest were to be cleared to provide grazing for “cattle.” Since the 1980s, however, as the Western markets for meat consumption began to decline as a result of health concerns, agribusiness behemoths such as Smithfield and Tyson have sought instead to open up new markets in developing countries, again with the help of the World Bank. This is achieved in part by framing notions of “development,” “progress,” and “modernity”—and by way of such terms as “nutrition,” “health,” “status,” “virility,” “need,” “demand,” and so forth—in terms of an increased consumption of animal protein.<sup>123</sup>

All of this goes into the enormous “housings” of industrialised death and disarticulation which, masked and yet releasing the unmistakable odours of industrial pollutants, are invariably constructed on the outskirts of towns already devastated by poverty and racial tensions. In this way, the slaughterhouses of the ghettoised North continue to render explicit the contemporary wound of the West’s colonial past, highlighting its structural racism and—implicit or explicit—discourses of eugenics, as we will see in the later discussion concerning the apocalyptic rhetoric of a cross-species pandemic. Indeed, I suggest that part of the reason for the movement from the spectacular guided tours of the slaughterhouses of Sinclair’s day to the blank walls, the accusatory rhetoric of sentimentality, and the guards whose explicit function is to block the public gaze, is in fact in order to conceal this remnant of something supposedly long past. Such a degree of concentration, enclosure and exploitation, in other words, is no longer considered acceptable in the “clean” information age of postindustrial society—at least, that is to say, for the “civilised” citizens of the North.

Hidden thus within the enclosure of the slaughterhouse, the various modes of capitalist reproduction remain clearly visible. The fragmentation inherent in the concentrated division of labour common to manufacture is clearly evident in the devalorisation of the slaughterer’s labour, coinciding with the replacement of individuals possessing specialist knowledge as to the killing, bleeding, and butchering of nonhuman animals by a labour process divided into a number of single, endlessly repeated tasks. This remains today the modality of slaughter, for the simple reason that

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<sup>123</sup> On this see, for example, Richard Twine *Animals as Biotechnology*, 127-135; Juliet Gellatley & Tony Wardle *The Silent Ark* (London & SF: Thorsons, 1996), 145-184; and David Nibert *Human Rights Animal Rights*, 102-113. On the inextricability of “meat,” patriarchy, and “virility,” see Derrida “‘Eating Well,’ or the Calculation of the Subject.”

large and, for the most part, healthy nonhuman animals are unpredictable: they resist and they fight for their lives. Not yet rendered sufficiently docile by selective breeding, the labour of slaughter thus requires that these still-living beings be physically dominated by other, technologically-assisted living beings. Thus, one worker fires a retractable bolt into the brain of one cow after another. A second worker attaches a chain to one hind leg after another. A third, the “sticker,” cuts one throat after another, and so on. Within the same windowless enclosure, the unstoppable disassembly line further transforms hundreds of other, “less skilled” workers into animate organs of its machine, compelled by its relentless speed to cut out a set number of kidneys every hour, to slice off so many feet and to empty out so many stomachs.

The disassembly line remains today identical in all but scale to those of the Chicago slaughterhouses which, in his 1922 autobiography *My Life and Work*, Henry Ford describes as the inspiration for his factory assembly line. The general idea, he writes, came from the mechanised chain by which the suspended corpses of nonhuman animals were moved from worker to worker, each of whom repeatedly performed one step in the process of “dressing beef.” It was, claimed Ford, “the first moving line ever installed” (cit. Patterson *Eternal Treblinka*, 72). This process, at once technological and disciplined and disciplinary, introduced something new, as Charles Patterson notes, into the ongoing industrialised exploitation of labour: that of “the neutralisation of killing and a new level of detachment” (72), further reducing workers to mere adjuncts of the machinery of capitalism.<sup>124</sup>

Nevertheless, the “less-skilled” operations—the labour performed upon corpses, in short—are increasingly coming to be carried out today by machines utilising the same knives as the “less efficient” workers once did. Hence, a single machine now carries millions of chickens, suspended upside-down from hooks, through an electrocution bath. A second machine then automatically chops off their heads. Meanwhile, a third machine scrapes clean the skins of a million pigs, and another immerses them in a tank of boiling water, and so on, each of these machines being for the most part overseen by a single worker. Along the length of the

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<sup>124</sup> In keeping with our discussions of the previous chapters, and particularly with regard to the improper phrasing “animal holocaust,” it should also be noted that Henry Ford was also a fanatical anti-Semite who throughout the 1920s used his own newspaper to promulgate a vicious anti-Semitic campaign. These publications were hugely popular in Germany and with Hitler himself, who came to regard Ford as “a comrade-in-arms.” On this, see Patterson *Eternal Treblinka*, 71-9.



contemporary disassembly line, therefore, the disciplinary modalities of manufacture, large-scale industry and Fordism all continue to coexist.

It is not by chance, however, that, in addition to the countless numbers of domesticated animals, the *human* animals who find themselves exploited by these “older” yet contemporary modalities of capitalist production are almost exclusively those figured as “less than (properly) human”: illegal immigrants, asylum seekers, people of colour, women, the dispossessed and the globally disenfranchised. Excluded as the foreign in the Same, the various devalorised groupings are then pitted against each other (and the Other) in a cynical displacing exercise of corporate capitalism.<sup>125</sup> As Deleuze writes, in the postindustrial era of control societies, the corporation protects itself from mass resistance—through trade unionising, for example—insofar as it “constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within” (“Postscript,” 5). Indeed, in this can be perceived how the myth of a “state of nature,” of a war of each against the all, continues to naturalise—perhaps ever more effectively—neoliberal individualism on behalf of the “new” societies of control.

### **Postindustrial factories: bioreactive bodies and manimals**

Postindustrial capitalism, with its new technologies of dispersion, nonetheless seeks contemporaneously to construct entirely new types of factories which instantiate not only a new reproductivity and a corresponding new paternity, but also a “new” *temporality*. Whereas the industrial factory discretised time, dividing up the working day into hours, minutes, and seconds, timing every step, every movement, in the search for the most efficient automaticisation of its worker-tools, the new factory aims to employ and to embody life itself, deconstructing the linear irreversibility of “natural” chronological time and instituting an unconditioned network in its place. These

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<sup>125</sup> “Multiple ethnic divisions among the workers function as an element of control in the labour process. The transnational corporation addresses with different methods and degrees of exploitation and repression each of the ethnic groups of workers ... and divisions among the workers along the various lines of ethnicity and identification prove to enhance profit and facilitate control” (Hardt and Negri: *Empire*, 2000). See also *Fast Food Nation* dir. Richard Linklater (Tartan Video, 2007).

postindustrial factories are the so-called *transgenic* animals themselves—also known as “bioreactors” or “pharm” animals—whose bodyings contain man-made genetic modifications (and which Sarah Franklin very deliberately calls “manimals” rather than the more neutral “humanimals”). It is no coincidence that the term “bioreactor” also names the machines which both culture cells and subject them to physical stimuli in order to incite a nonspecific “protoform” to *self-assemble* into a specified morphology. “Pharm” animals, in other words, are “bioreactors” because they are considered *instruments of fabrication*. For example, a transgenic “dairy” animal may be constructed so as to carry and express a human gene in order to *manufacture* certain proteins in her milk or blood which can then be used to make pharmaceutical commodities for rare genetic diseases as well as for common metabolic disorders such as diabetes.

While Polly the sheep was one such “manimal,” her more famous queer kin Dolly was not, insofar as she wasn’t a pharm animal, but rather served to validate through her being the very experimental technology which promised to produce “manimals” in the future. Nevertheless, Dolly too, as Franklin says, can be “thought of as a nuclear breeder reactor in that she, too, is a model of a specific kind of manufacture—not through her milk, but in her embodiment of the viability of [somatic cell] nuclear transfer using differentiated adult cells from culture” (*Dolly Mixtures*, 210-211n3). In this, Dolly in fact exemplifies the functioning of the “promise” not only within the biotechnological domain, but in the neoliberal financialisation of the globe in general.

More than even this, however, Dolly embodies the ability to *reverse time* and thus, as we will see, promises nothing less than a potential *immortality*—a claim by no means contradicted by her untimely death in 2003 as a result of lung disease common to animals kept in close confinement. For the moment, however, it is sufficient to note that, in the context of the transformation from disciplinary societies to societies of control, the shift to postgenomics—

has been occasioned by changes in how the gene is imaged and imagined, whereby the language of genetic codes, messages, and information has yielded to discourses of genetic pathways, switches, or constructs to be downloaded .... It is these transformations—at once conceptual and technological, as well as commercial and political, and nationally specific—that the making of Dolly the sheep both demonstrates and performs (Franklin *Dolly Mixtures*, 34).

It is this postgenomic shift—that is to say, a movement subsequent to, and dependent upon, the mapping of the human genome—away from an understanding of the gene as determined and determining which permits, among other things, an ever more intimate experimentation speculating upon the conversion of nonhuman bodies into innovative forms of capital. In this way, biotechnology finds itself, by way of available funding opportunities, changes in patent law and so forth, increasingly entwined with both the pharmaceutical industry and agribusiness in the quest to capitalise on farmed animals in ever more innovative ways.

However, as a number of theorists have pointed out, Richard Twine perhaps foremost among them, this speculative venture requires, in addition to favourable regulation and a promissory rhetoric, “a reductive view of the animal as genetic knowledge” (*Animals as Biotechnology*, 61). The reasons for this are quite simple: in order to justify the instrumentalisation of other animals, those animals must first be objectified *as* instruments. Such animals, that is, must first be reduced to “mere” mechanisms entirely determined by cause and effect, and in stark contrast to the “free will” attributed only to the human animal. Such a view, in other words, reduces nonsubstitutable living beings to Cartesian *factories* of reproduction. Moreover, biotechnology, continues Twine, not only perpetuates the factory metaphor, but in fact *realises* it:

Under biopower, the factory metaphor is unsurprising—the emphasis is on the controlled productivity of the body, be that in the form of meat, labour, fitness or new offspring. ... In a reductionist sense, animal bodies are factories for the production of protein for human consumption, for the conversion of plant material into animal commodities. The commercialisation of animal bodies for the production of biopharmaceuticals serves to bring this literal “body as factory” explicitly into relief. ... Whereas the conversion of the animal body into information takes the organic into an inorganic media, the body as factory and laboratory reverses this, but similarly blurs the boundaries between organic and inorganic, and between body and technology (93-4).

In this, the cloned or “pharm” animal-as-factory is symptomatic of the more general shift from life conceived *metaphorically* as information, to life understood practically as its *literal* actualisation which can be patented and thus commodified. Constituted as an accumulation of determined genetic knowledge, such a body is thus re-constituted

as a mediated and distributed materiality entirely suited to the highly mobile, geographically dispersed networks of telecommunication and commercial capital.

In contrast to industrial model of selective breeding, Dolly as a standardised *product* is no longer what matters. Rather, it is only as a promise, as a venture of capital, that she counts. Her value, in other words, resides only in her potential to generate innumerable and unpredictable future life forms, and thus infinite surplus value. It is in this way that the promise of biotechnology is promoted as the answer to apparent limits of capitalist growth, a claim which parallels, and depends upon, the shift beyond the “biological barrier” formerly considered as a “natural” boundary beyond which only God could trespass. In this context, the promissory value of both bioremediation and “extremophiles,” for example, is obvious. By way of the former, new microbes can be designed which will “clean up” industrial—even radioactive—waste, whilst at the same time reproducing surplus value for their “owners.” Extremophiles, meanwhile, are microorganisms who thrive in environments previously thought impossible to support any life—environments without oxygen and light, for example.<sup>126</sup>

Reproducible at the genetic level, manufactured and manufacturing cyborg bodyings—neither wholly living nor wholly organic, and forever working towards their own consumption—are thus by definition infinitely replaceable. Thus, while no longer constituted as a mass pathic body at the level of the species, individual nonhuman animals nonetheless remain resolutely undying, eminently “lose-able” and thus killable. Indeed, somewhat ironically, actual nonsubstitutable animals such as Dolly and Polly are now considered *so* individual as to be *patentable*, but only insofar as they are identically reproducible, a process which thus both presupposes and extends the naturalisation of “the animal” as *property*.

Such bodies, never entirely alive, have no value in *being*. Their value resides entirely in the informatic promise articulating their fleshly materiality, a value which can only be actualised in their *disarticulation*, be that into “cuts” or into cells. The nonhuman animal thus becomes at once informatic network and speculative capital, already calculated as fragments for consumption before being born and already

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<sup>126</sup> It is in the context of the promissory value of extremophiles that one could do well to consider the way an antienvironmentalist neoliberalism has appropriated complexity theory. See, for example, James E. Lovelock *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth* (1987). On the affinities between such a position and neoliberal economics, see Cooper *Life as Surplus*, 41–50.

commodified for future consumption in as yet unknown forms. More than this, corporate capitalism comes to control, and indeed own and institute, the transnational flows of a new form of *techno-bio-logical* reproduction. As a result, the actual clinical trialing of biopharmaceutical products, for example, is increasingly being outsourced to the South. Similarly, the unregulated global trade in unfertilised human eggs is increasingly a feature of the marginalised South (and must thus be studied in their specific, locally situated emergences). Typically, in both of these instances it is women who must bear the brunt of this implicit notion of a lesser value placed upon the lives and bodies of the nonWestern “other.”

At the same time, the old industrial-model slaughterhouse remains. Only, as I have suggested, it is deregulated and displaced into the margins by way of an increasing *immigrantisation* of “meat.” Moreover, the promise of ever-larger feedlots and industrial slaughterhouses remains dependent in many ways upon the postindustrial promise of biotechnology. This is not just in order to produce more cost-effective “food” animals such as genetically-engineered blind hens who would apparently “benefit” from not having to witness their own conditions, but also to justify the continuing slaughter on environmental grounds. If bioremediated microbes, for example, can be built not only to clean the enormous and enormously toxic lagoons of fecal matter that are the inevitable by-product of mass slaughter, but moreover to flourish in doing so, then a major “natural” limit on the industrialisation of “meat” will have been overcome. Indeed, like the capitalist appropriation of “green” concerns like recycling, the massive overproduction of cowshit promises to become a profitable venture in itself.

### **The promise of new times: serpents and sheep**

With this interarticulation of two modalities of capital, we thus discover two contradictory temporalities. For the poor countries of the South, the North exports, as a rationale for market and geophysical coercion, an evolutionary narrative of “progress” and “modernity.” For the North by the North, however, a second narrative is constructed: that of post-modernist reversibility, recapacitation, and immortality. On the one hand, this pushes the South ever further into the margins of “base” industrial production figured by a myth of redemptive temporality: the promise of a “modern”

future for which the poor must sacrifice themselves today. On the other, the poor of the North are reduced to desolation on the basis of the capitalist promise of an incalculable future which nonetheless remains dependent upon the historical limits of capitalism, limits which “unfortunately” but inevitably impoverish the present. Whereas Deleuze writes that societies of control have as their emblematic animal the “undulatory” serpent (“Postscript,” 5), I would argue that it is rather a certain postgenomic sheep who best embodies the postindustrial narrative. This is because Dolly, at both cellular and organismic levels, not so much undulates or orbits but rather *interrupts*, and even *reverses*, the arrow of time itself, and it is around this promised reversal that the imaginary of a certain neoliberal transhumanism coheres.<sup>127</sup>

“Developed” by Ian Wilmut, Dolly was not fashioned with the intention of producing a clone, but was rather part of a large, heavily-funded corporate project to build more efficient transgenic animals (Dolly herself was not transgenic) capable of expressing pharmaceutical products for human commodification and consumption. In fact, her status as a “clone” is largely irrelevant to her promise (indeed, she is arguably not a clone anyway, insofar as she was generated from the merger of *two* cells from *two* female parents, a Finn Dorset ewe and a Scottish Blackface). Rather, Dolly’s value is as a *technique*, that of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT)—a technique which transforms the very notion of the biological.

Recalling here that the promise of biotechnology depends upon a reduction of “the animal” to determined genetic knowledge for its moral justification, what the “viability” of Dolly teaches us, however, is that it is precisely such a notion of genetic determinism that can no longer be maintained. For so long considered self-evident—at least as far as nonhuman beings are concerned—prior to Dolly the genetic was “defined by its one-way instructional, coding or determining capacity” (Franklin *Dolly Mixtures*, 33).<sup>128</sup> According to such an understanding of genetic function, however, Dolly constitutes a biological impossibility. This is because deterministic gene function presupposes that in its development each cell must irretrievably “commit” itself to becoming a specific type, be it a heart cell or a skin cell or whatever and, in thus committing itself, it loses the capacity to become any other type of cell.

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<sup>127</sup> There are of course many different ways of understanding the notion of the “transhuman.” For a good example of a radical rather than reactionary interpretation, see Keith Ansell Pearson’s *Viroid Life: Perspectives on Nietzsche and the Transhuman Condition*.

<sup>128</sup> In the following discussion of the science behind Dolly’s emergence, I am indebted to the work of Sarah Franklin.

According to this linear schema, therefore, cells must “decide” once and for all at each stage of their teleological differentiation, with each decision being irreversible and irrevocable. Coincident with its differentiation, these decisive steps lead immutably to the aging and death of the mortal cell. Hence, the determinist view of the gene insists, by virtue of an irrevocable unidirectionality, on an uninterrupted progress towards a specificity of function. Any given cell can therefore become nothing other than what it already is, that is, it can neither reverse time to become newly totipotent (i.e., an undifferentiated cell with the potential to become any form of tissue, of which the embryonic stem cell is the most celebrated, and controversial, example), nor can it reverse direction in order to embark upon a specific new trajectory of development.

What Wilmut, Keith Campbell and the team at the Roslin Institute established, however, is that biological development can in fact be reversed, even in fully differentiated adult cells. Indeed, this is the main reason why Dolly herself is seen as breaching an apparently “natural” boundary. “Produced” from a mortal adult mammary cell, the very bodying of Dolly demonstrates that such cells can indeed re-function as *immortal* reproductive germline cells. Dolly the sheep, in short, embodies this pluridirectional movement at the most elemental level. Initially described by Wilmut as a process of “de-differentiation,” Franklin more accurately describes it as a “*recapacitation*” of cell functionality (41). In this, a capacity thought to be decisively lost in the temporalising of specialisation either turns out never to have been lost, or else such “decisions” never in fact take place. Thus, Franklin points out, “another way to describe what the Dolly technique enables is a retemporalisation of biology. In other words, through biotechniques, the temporality of the biological is being rescaled, or even recreated” (41).

Cell recapacitation, in other words, promises cell immortality. While various implications of this, specifically in the domain of tissue engineering, will be considered in detail later insofar as it informs the utopian discourse of “transhuman” enhancement, for the moment I want to consider how this impacts specifically upon the ways of being—and their removal—of nonhuman animals. Most importantly, recapacitation promises to transform the lived temporality of domesticated animals—so-called “livestock”—insofar as breeding stock in the form of actual nonhuman animals, or even just the eggs and the sperm (which still require actual animals, however distanced in space and time), are no longer required for viable reproduction.

Rather, a single animal, living or dead, in whole or in part, can now be transformed into a gene bank from which an entire herd of cloned animals can be produced in the space of a few months, rather than over several years. This compression of genealogical time, as Franklin explains, simultaneously “offers total nuclear genetic purity, in perpetuity, and under patent” (“Dolly’s Body,” 353) and is thus considered an advance over the unpredictability of sexual reproduction. Hence, whereas Fordist breeding techniques reproduce genealogy as a source of individual value and thus surplus value, somatic cell nuclear transfer instead deranges this temporality and spatiality entirely. In short, no *actual* animals are required to achieve a perpetual germline repository and thus a certain form of immortality—what Franklin terms “life stock.”

While no “actual” animals are required to produce a genetically pure herd, however, the actual “identical” nonhuman animals of that herd must nonetheless continue to produce *viable* offspring—“viable” here referring to “natural” sexual reproduction as well as to the process of commodification itself. Bioengineered animals, in short, must also be able to “naturally” reproduce, if only to reassure potential consumers concerned with the question of their “naturalness.” In this way, the viability—in the sense of their literal consumability—of the herd’s “natural” offspring serves to retroactively naturalise the bioengineered herd at the same time as ensuring that all the “old” industrial disassembly lines hidden behind blank slaughterhouse walls continue to run at top speed.

We can now further understand the viability—that is, the promise—performed by Dolly. A singular, nonsubstitutable materiality that is at once patentable and infinitely reproducible, she brings together in and as one body the promise of the industrial and the postindustrial, discipline and control in a mutual articulation of informatics, biotechnology and immortality on the one hoof and, on the other, a global agribusiness dealing in biotechnologically-accelerated death. Dolly intersects here too with the biotechnological pharmacology of health: life-enhancing pharmaceuticals crossing with death-accelerating antibiotics and growth hormones. At one extreme there is a perpetually-extended human lifespan, and at the other there is the accelerated death of the slaughterhouse. Further, just as “meat” serves to efface the more difficult human-nonhuman interactions behind an unidentifiable, plastic-wrapped trope, so too biotechnology continues to efface its most problematic human-nonhuman interactions by way of a determinist rhetoric of “data banks” and “sequencing.”



## Owning emergence, determining the undetermined

To reiterate, Dolly's value lies *not* in her actual, nonsubstitutable being, but rather in the *technique* of which she provides the proof of viability. In this, Dolly *herself* is without value. Unlike in the case of the stud animal, as Franklin makes clear,

*neither her own genes nor her own generative capacity are valuable. ... In this sense, cloning by nuclear transfer enables genetic capital to be removed from the animal herself—and doubly so. ... Dolly's own ability to produce lambs is merely a subordinated sign of her individual viability as a natural-technical product of corporate bioscience. ... The aim of producing Dolly was to demonstrate the viability of a technique that bypasses her own reproductive capacity, which is too inexact ("Dolly's Body," 352-3).*

It is exactly here, by way of these new temporalities, that biocapitalism indeed seeks yet again to bypass its own "natural" biological and temporal limits. The vertical linearity of genealogy is thus rewritten as a postindustrial rhizomatic network at the level of both genes and bodies. Moreover, these two "levels"—as we shall see in the critique of Stiegler's philosophical anthropology in the next section—in fact coexist on the same plane, reciprocally articulating one another in a transductive relationship.

Furthermore, Dolly here embodies, as both engineered technique and organism, the promise of regenerative medicine at the level of tissue engineering. This is because it is only the (patentable) generative *process*, not its actualisations, which counts: an informatic and material *speculation*, the biological promise is the future which remains to be both ventured into and upon. A promise, moreover, of future *property* rights regulated by an ever-looser patent law, and of a newly-instituted *paternity* beyond all limits—what Melinda Cooper terms "a not yet realised surplus of life" (*Life as Surplus*, 140). It is the promise, in other words, of the transformation of life into a patentable property of origin and infinite potential, in which one holds the rights to all possible future forms. It is, in short, the promised ownership of "the moment of emergence" itself (127).

That this premise depends upon the deconstruction of biological time understood as a determined linearity has an enormous array of consequences, not least for the presupposition—that nonhuman animals are reducible to genetic information—

which serves to “ground” the promissory discourse of biotechnology in the first place. The promise of an infinite *surplus* of life, that is, contradicts the very *reduction* of life which functions to justify its *use* as property. As we have seen, a rhetoric of genetic determinism is employed so as to morally enable the ongoing experimental practice of genetic *indetermination*. This, however, is not its only purpose. In addition, the discursive reduction of nonhuman life to an instinctive, unidirectional mechanism, to the transmission of a simple code, serves at once to *efface the threat of excessive mutability* inherent in the post-Dolly practices of biotechnology. In short, the rhetoric of genetic determinism—what Kaushik Sunder Rajan calls both a “conventional fiction” and a “fetish”—serves at once to ground the promise of biocapital in moral terms *and* to efface the very real danger attending its excessive *indeterminism*. Lastly, one should also consider the supportive role played by the “old” patriarchal and Platonic economy of genetic determinism—in which the male imprints its DNA upon the passive female egg—in the constitution of Dolly’s “new” scientific “paternity.” While the Dolly technique, insofar as it is the egg cytoplasm which serves as the “instructor” within what is always a “*situated biological communication*” (Franklin *Dolly Mixtures*, 42), thus overturns the original patriarchal determinism, Dolly herself is nonetheless reappropriated within a scientific paternity founded upon a (male human) mastery of the (female animal) body.

Most important here, however, is that Dolly embodies an explicit *refusal* of genetic determinism, a repudiation of behaviourist biological conditioning, performing instead a biological *plasticity*. Moreover, insofar as pathways of genetic development can be reversed and reinstructed by external stimulus, this means that, in addition to their newfound flexibility, genes have become thoroughly “*situational and contextual*” (44). As a result of the singular bodyings of Dolly, Polly, and their queer kin, in other words, the undetermined process of biological life must henceforth be understood as the mutual articulation of genetic and epigenetic effects within positive feedback loops. It is this process which Bernard Stiegler terms *epiphylogenesis*—a way of being which, as Dolly demonstrates, can no longer be restricted to *human* biological processes.

## Countering reactive epiphylogenesis

As we have seen, and as is already marked by the term “bio-technology,” the nonhuman animal body increasingly unsettles the boundary between the organic and the inorganic—between body and technology—from both directions, animal-as-information on the one hand, animal-as-factory on the other. In what I am calling the *pharmacology* of the promise, this can perhaps be considered as both the dark side and the dystopian material support of the tranhumanist utopia. This unsettling of the limits between technicity and animal bodies, in this case both human and nonhuman, inevitably calls to mind Stiegler’s recent philosophical and anthropological attempt to yet again install an apparently secure human-animal dichotomy.

For Stiegler, this boundary is re-drawn through the concept of epiphylogenesis, denoting the transmission of both inherited and newly-learned knowledge beyond the lifespan of the individual in the form of artefactual memory aids. By way of these artefacts, insofar as they are an *exteriorisation* by way of *hypomnemata*, the technical and the human are *co-constituting*. This is because, writes Stiegler, exteriorisation and interiorisation (consciousness) necessarily originate in a *transductive* relation, that is to say, a relation in which the elements do not precede their relation. In this sense, the evolutionary appearing of “the human” as consciousness (interiorisation) only emerges in its relation to a technics, just as the technological (exteriorisation) only comes into being in its relation to the human.

Hence, according to Stiegler, *animals can never be technical bodies*. Moreover, not only do nonhuman animals *not* exteriorise, and thus not conserve epigeneses, nor can they therefore possess any form of “internal” consciousness whatsoever. As a result, nonhuman beings, insofar as they possess neither collective heritage nor the capacity to teach others, can never *respond*, but only and always *react*.<sup>129</sup> A nonhuman living being, writes Stiegler—albeit with the prefatory proviso that this is the case only “[i]f molecular biology is correct”—“is defined by the somatic memory of the *epigenetic* and the germinal memory of the *genetic*, which *in principle do not communicate with each other*” (*Technics and Time*, II:4; final emphasis added).

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<sup>129</sup> In *Bioethics in the Age of New Media* (2009), Joanna Zylińska also engages with Stiegler in order to argue for a new ethics founded upon a prior relationality of the human and the nonhuman. She does not, however, question the founding exceptionalism organising Stiegler’s discourse.

In other words, nonhuman animals are determined solely on the level of species and entirely by their genetic—as opposed to technical or symbolic—characteristics which precede any actual appearing of an individual nonhuman being. Such an “individual” thus exists in a state of something akin to the non-consciousness of perpetual forgetting (in the blackest darkness, Stiegler will say).<sup>130</sup>

Such a determinism, it should be noted straight away, inscribes nonhuman beings as entirely substitutable and reproducible: every newborn is indistinguishable from any other of the same species at the same stage of evolutionary development, the only possible differentiation being in the species as a whole across the aeons of evolutionary time. By contrast, for Stiegler the technical-body that is the human constitutes an absolute rupture with this “pure life” of animals. The problem, however, is that Stiegler nonetheless maintains his agreement with Jacques Derrida as to the *différance* which constitutes “life” itself—here understood by Stiegler as the “pure life” which is to be devoid of technicity—and which thus inscribes every living being as always already ruptured by the trace. While Stiegler, in drawing his human-animal distinction, then goes on to argue that the emergence of “the human” as a technical-body constitutes a further, utterly discontinuous rupture, what needs to be remarked here is that the differential trace in fact *already* inscribes the bodying of “pure life” as a co-constitutive (transductive) technical-body. Indeed, this last is further supported by the very practice of molecular biology upon whose authority Stiegler would otherwise like to found his claim. As Sunder Rajan explains, while “a central source of authority for genomics” stems from genetic determinism, the relationship of genes to traits is rather “a set of complex, multifactorial interactions (*which are multifactorial both at the genetic level and in the interactions of “genetic” and “environmental” factors*)” (*Biocapital*, 145; emphasis added). Paradoxically, Stiegler thus reduces nonhuman animals to non-conscious causal mechanisms while at once affirming that such “pure biology” or “pure life” is always already *différent* from nonliving automata.

We have, by way of Nietzsche’s notion of an auto-ordering and mutually forming memory, to a large degree already engaged with this latest charge by Stiegler,

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<sup>130</sup> Stiegler can here be read as reiterating Nietzsche’s famous contention in the second of the *Untimely Meditations* that “the animal” is a being who “at once forgets and for whom every moment really dies, sinks back into night and fog and is extinguished forever. Thus the animal lives *unhistorically*” (“On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life,” 61). However, as I have argued in the previous chapter, Nietzsche’s notion of “the animal”—in contrast to Stiegler’s—refers not to living beings, but functions rather as a *figure* of the impossible state of being prior to mnemotechnics.

one in which the latter denies all consciousness, and thus all *sense*, to nonhuman animals. We have briefly noted too the historicity and historiology of the Addo elephants, who have transmitted down through the generations of their specific sociocultural group a learned hatred for human animals. We might also recall the famous troop of Japanese macaques studied by Itani Junichiro and Kawamura Syunzo. One of the troop, a young female, began washing her sweet potatoes clean of grit and sand before consuming them in order to protect her teeth. This habit, which is undoubtedly a *technique* as well as a gestural writing, was quickly transmitted to other youngsters and females via female-lineage hierarchies, with the sub-adult males being the last to learn. In this way, Donna Haraway notes, “social and technical innovation emerged from the practices of youngsters and their mothers” (*Primate Visions*, 253-4). It of course follows that, if such new habits can be learned by contemporaries in the group, they can therefore also be passed on down the generations insofar as one’s contemporary may also be one’s child.

However, the bodying of Dolly, and at once the Dolly technique, has direct consequences *at the genetic level* for Stiegler’s re-founding of the human-animal distinction insofar as he proposes the origin of the human in and as its exteriorisation as retentional technologies, of which writing is the privileged example. Here, I suggest, recapacitation is *already* a writing, a retentional technology of and on the body. It is a writing, that is to say, which, in contrast to the one-way signalling presupposed by genetic determinism, is transmissible both intergenerationally and, indirectly by way of epigenetic recapacitation *in situ*, to one’s contemporaries.

There is *iterability*, in other words, always already at the genetic level, and thus sedimentation, habit, and encounter. Indeed, this reiterates the notion of “life already outside of itself” traced throughout this thesis. This is further supported by the increasing focus within contemporary molecular biology on epigenesis, and hence on interaction and relation. As such, this necessitates a focus on singularly situated, nonsubstitutable way(s) of being, that is to say, upon *this* actual, irreplaceable and nonreplicable animal, and not upon the species in general. Similarly, this focus is increasingly coming to inform laboratory as well as ethological studies of nonhuman animal behaviours. Such studies attempt to think *with*, rather than *for*, or even *as*, those beings with whom human scientists engage by focusing upon the reciprocal relations

which co-constitute in part the *experience* of both individual nonhuman animals *and* the individual human animals, who thus both study and respond to each other.<sup>131</sup>

However, despite calling upon the authority of microbiology, Stiegler nonetheless refuses just such an “experience” to all other animals. Moreover, this human-animal distinction, already hugely problematic, further serves as the basis of Stiegler’s critique of *human* audiovisual and informatic “psychotechnologies” which, he claims, break up the “long circuits” of *generational time* at the behest of speculative capital. This is because, as we shall see, it is “the animal”—or else an “aspect” of animality—to whom or to which such psychotechnologies end up reducing “the human.” In other words, in order to ground this devolutionary movement of postindustrial capital, Stiegler must reduce—at least for the most part, as we will see—nonhuman animals to the level of “mere” instinctive (i.e., genetically determined) anticipation. He names this way of being, which is the permanent forgetting of non-consciousness, “vigilance.” And yet, what Dolly, *inter alia*, makes explicit is precisely that the postindustrial breaking up of generational time, both symbolically and literally, characterises societies of control *in general*, rather than being something which, as Stiegler contends, can only happen to human animals by way of psychotechnologies.<sup>132</sup>

Whereas Stiegler bases his account on the paleontology of André Leroi-Gourhan, here I have chosen to leave aside the considerable amount of recent ethological findings which refute Stiegler’s claims for a human exceptionalism. Rather, I have decided instead to focus on the questions which Dolly’s way(s) of being raises for the notion of exteriorisation understood as a break with “pure life.” By further considering the implications of the “simple” nonhuman body as being already a technical body, this will in turn permit us to further rethink the notion of “life” as always already freed from life. More importantly, however, what this engagement with Stiegler’s discourse also provides is a way to understand, by way of a reworking of

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<sup>131</sup> On this, see the influential (albeit as yet largely untranslated) work of Vinciane Despret, including *Quand le loup habitera avec l’agneau* (2002), *Hans, le cheval qui savait compter* (2004), *Penser comme un rat* (2009) and, in particular, *Être Bête* with Jocelyne Porcher (2007).

<sup>132</sup> This is not to suggest there was no manipulation of generational time within Fordist agribusiness—one thinks of artificial insemination and the chemical synchronisation of menstrual cycles. I am rather referring here to the institution of a new, post-Fordist temporality no longer defined by the modernist paradigm of linear progress.

epiphylogenesis, what I have called *the pharmacology of the promise* from the position of *actual* animals.

Brought together with the dispersed temporality of promissory capital, I will argue that we find here a doubling of the *pharmakon*: while the promised remedies of both the transhuman and the posthumanist must somehow control the threat of a poisonous mutability, this poison is figured in different ways. Whereas the promise of an immortal transhuman assemblage fears the poison of a potential zoonotic (i.e. inter-species) pandemic, the monstrous zoogenetic promise of a Nietzschean posthuman animal must rather contend with a self-interested nihilism which inevitably finds its place within a rigorously deconstructed Nature-Culture binary.

### **A darkness as black as one will**

Despite being increasingly dispelled, it nonetheless remains a common misapprehension that cloned beings (irrespective of species) will not only be *genetically* identical, not only *physically* identical, but also will be somehow condemned to lead identical *lives*—a misunderstanding which, knowingly or otherwise, presupposes that every being is therefore entirely reproducible and thus substitutable. This in part accounts for the anxiety cloning inspires, insofar as it explicitly puts into question both the uniqueness of the individual human subject and the exceptional status of the human being. The basis of both the misapprehension and the anxiety is thus the presupposition that living beings are entirely determined by their DNA, and are thus entirely predictable—that is, *machinic*. In this schema, all epigenetic variation, before any question of transmissibility, is rendered *a priori* impossible insofar as behaviour is rather programmed in advance at the genetic level and is thus independent of the being-there of existence. According to such a schema, evolution therefore progresses not by adaptation, but only by accidental genomic mutation. At the same time, and against overwhelming empirical evidence, this presupposes that no actual animal, including a human, can respond in any way to significant unprecedented and relatively sudden environmental change, but can do so only as the passive recipients of chance “aberrations” over the immense evolutionary time of speciation.

While this is patently not the case—cloning, precisely because of genetic plasticity, will rather result in a proliferation of individual mutations<sup>133</sup>—one can nonetheless wonder how Stiegler’s reduction of nonhuman animals to a non-conscious “vigilance” differs from such an absolute privileging of “nature” at the cost of “nurture.” On the one hand, Stiegler indeed affirms that “the tracing of any simple boundary [*frontière*] between humanity and animality must be called into question” (*Technics and Time*, I:151), and yet, on the other, insists upon “the simple automatic or programmatic-genetic behaviour of a fabricating animal [*animal fabricant*]” (151).

How might these contradictory statements be resolved? For Stiegler, I would suggest, the “simple boundary” necessarily refers to a peculiar kind of “creationist” humanism, in which “a forthrightly recognisable human” appears fully-formed amid an otherwise genetically programmed animal landscape. In this way, he indeed refuses the essential and timeless human subject, but only so as to reinscribe the division *within time*, insofar as the human both evolves *from* the animal, and yet, in a single technical blow (*coup*), becomes absolutely other. This is the moment in which the human appears in and as its transductive relation with technicity, whose uniqueness consists in its potential to free itself from “socioethnic” constraints, in contrast to the animal who rather “has no possibility [*n’a pas de possibilité*] of freeing herself from genetic constraints [*de s’affranchir des contraintes génétiques*]” (171, trans. modified).

This blow dealt to life, this difference (or *différance*) is, writes Stiegler, the “modality of programming of, and by, memory, the consequence of the passage from liberation to exteriorisation, [which] concretises its new possibilities at the individual level, reinserting them, when they are totally realised, into the socioethnic level” (171-2). This “idiomatic differentiation,” in other words, is not only the ability both to learn and to transmit possibilities beyond the *individual* lifespan, but it is also the condition of the “new” itself. This constitutes—

an essential shift [*déplacement essentiel*] from the level of the species to that of the individual, who is undetermined in its behavioural possibilities, if not in its zoological limits and in the already-there of the world in which it lives, from which it inherits, to which it must answer [*enchaîner*], and which it appropriates by altering it (172).

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<sup>133</sup> On this, see Luciana Parisi *Abstract Sex: Philosophy, Bio-technology and the Mutations of Desire* (London & New York: Continuum, 2004).



The human, in other words, is *relatively undetermined*, as a result of cultural (symbolic, technological) inheritance, in contrast to the animal who is *instinctively determined* as a result of genetic (natural, material) inheritance. This is of course a very traditional gesture: the positing of an originary “liberation” of the human as (relative) free-will from the programmed machinery of animality.

Indeed, at times Stiegler himself seems to draw back from this absolute position when, in what is a very Heideggerian gesture, he suggests that there is nonetheless “certainly a kind of ‘privative’ form of anticipation” available to nonhuman animals (163). Anticipation, it should be noted, is for Stiegler the futural way of being which defines the human alone insofar as it possesses a “unique and incontestable relation to death” (164)—a claim which is itself, as we have already seen, eminently contestable. Stiegler is not, however, so much as offering some kind of limited consciousness to nonhuman animals as he is rather organising a necessary precondition so as to ensure the consistency of his exceptionalist argument. In fact, this hesitant “privative” anticipation is necessary for Stiegler so as to *maintain* the division it appears to put back into question. The positing of a “privative,” instinctive form of anticipation for base survival is, in other words, that which preserves, by way of a simultaneous evolutionary continuity and discontinuity, the possibility of the human itself. It is a possibility, as Stiegler writes, “that is opened however minutely, *in a darkness as black as one will* [*une pénombre aussi opaque que l’on voudra*], but that is already the possibility of a divergence and therefore *something of a projection* [*une sorte quelconque de projection*] of a ‘symbolic’ type rather than of a type of ‘survival behaviour’” (163, emphases added).

Absolute genetic determinism, as we have seen, not only denies all possibility of epiphylogenesis, but also of *epigenesis* as well, in contrast to both empirical evidence and scientific argument. This “minute opening,” however, permits a nonhuman animal “some sort of” or “something like” a symbolic projection, something which seems to exceed determinism, but which is nonetheless only a “privative” version of what remains uniquely human. Much the same as Heidegger’s “worldly poor” animals, Stiegler’s animals might *appear* to have access to the symbolic, might *appear* to “have” the “as,” but in reality they remain dissolved within the “pure life” of the darkest non-consciousness. As a result, Stiegler’s attribution of privation concedes that while one may encounter a “clever” nonhuman animal (albeit this in fact only appears to be the case), the *species* is nonetheless condemned to

perpetual dumbness, never able, whether as a whole or within specific social groupings, to learn either from their individual mistakes or their triumphs. “Privative” anticipation is, in short, simply the possibility of a human rupture in an otherwise absolutely determined biosphere.

As we will see, however, there is more at stake here than a simple, unthinking reiteration of a traditional culture-nature dichotomy. The exclusion of “the animal” in fact serves an essential function in the construction of the postindustrial posthuman dystopia which Stiegler’s critical philosophy seeks to combat. As such, nonhuman animals become rather a mere tool within Stiegler’s anthropocentrism. Here, let us recall how the “fetishist” rhetoric of genetic determinism permits an instrumentalising of nonhuman animals which in turn justifies the promise of biocapital in moral terms, whilst at the same time effacing the threat of genetic flexibility which organises the promissory discourse of biotechnology. We can now see how Stiegler’s reductive notion of animal “vigilance” parallels that of biotechnology itself. Just as genetic determinism serves both to secure and efface a transductive relation of interior and exterior within the discourse of biotechnology, so too genetic determinism serves both to secure and efface epiphylogenetic variation within Stiegler’s philosophical anthropocentrism. Indeed, this might well help explain the recurrent references to agribusiness, embryology, and biotechnology that populate Stiegler’s texts. To understand its importance, however, one must understand how the exclusivity of human epiphylogenesis permits Stiegler’s own promissory rhetoric of *psychotechnics*, in which the potentiality of an inventive breaking with “socioethnic constraints” is constructed in opposition to an (impossible) regressive becoming-animal at the behest of postindustrial *psychotechnologies*.

Nonhuman animals are genetically determined, human animals are relatively undetermined. This is Stiegler’s argument. Culture is defined by a transductive organic-technological relation, in contrast to a state of Nature defined as an “absence of all relation” (128). The question then, is who or what, or who *and* what, are transgenic animals according to this founding exclusion which underpins Stiegler’s philosophy? Given that they are both human and animal at the genetic level, itself a writing of and in the body, do they *become* human artefacts, or do they *produce* human, or animal, artefacts? Are they technological beings, or simply “pure life”? Dolly, Polly, and the others all promise, in short, to highlight the ungrounded assumptions underlying Stiegler’s anthropocentrism.

### Stepping into, and falling from, the light: being human becoming animal

In considering the structural undecidability of such ways of being, it is first of all necessary to recall one last time Andrew Benjamin's discussion of the two dominant forms of the human-animal distinction as drawn along a teleological dialectic. In the first form, as we know, the human depends upon the death or the ceasing to exist of the animal and, in the second, the human is required to repeatedly overcome the animal in a constant struggle both to become and to remain human. Stiegler, it is clear, founds his thinking of the co-constitution of the human and the technical upon an evolutionary dialectic of the first type. In other words, the coming into being-exteriorised of the human is a *coup* in which the human is always already not animal, insofar as the human *is* only in ceasing to be an animal. Such a blow or coup thus takes place once and for all.

Indeed, Stiegler locates the precise moment of anthropogenesis in the technics of the Zinjanthropian period. Responding, for example, to Leroi-Gourhan's suggestion that the Zinjanthropian is still in fact a "quasi-zoology," Stiegler states with absolute certainty that "it is already no longer anything of the kind, otherwise one could not speak of exteriorisation" (142). It is rather the case, he says, that it is in the intermediary period between "the Zinjanthropian who is *already a man*, and the Neanthropian opening onto the human that we are" (142), that the human "free[s] itself [*se dégageant*] slowly from the shadows like a statue out of a block of marble" (141). Here, I am assuming that this notion of the shadow [*ombre*] refers to the darkness [*pénombre*] which marks the animal's absence of relation from which the human, *already a man* by virtue of technicity, emerges into the full light of humanity.

The obvious question, at this stage, is what of the numerous technological forms employed by nonhuman animals, from carefully prepared (and subsequently retained) wooden levers and sharpened stones (the use of flint tools, claims Stiegler, constitutes the origin of the human) to the construction of complex dwellings and the sharing of meanings by way of otherwise arbitrary signifiers? What of the gestural language of chimpanzees, of the ritualised enactments of social status combined with the imparting of site-specific knowledge, that is, information localised in both space and time? Are all of these not also material artefacts, repositories of knowledge and

conventional languages, and thus also exteriorisations? To my knowledge, Stiegler offers nothing on this question, despite its relevance to his own claims and to the ongoing debates in related fields.

The second point is that, despite this insistence on the absolute exceptionalism of the human by way a co-constitutive technicity, in *Taking Care of Youth and the Generations* (2008), Stiegler nonetheless seems to suggest that the human can be somehow reduced to, or even returned to, an animal way of being. It is a reduction, or perhaps devolution, moreover, which is a *consequence* of exteriorisation in general, and of those biotechnologies in particular which Stiegler calls “psychotechnologies.” This then, would suggest a supplemental—and mutually exclusive—humanist teleology of the *second* form.

How then, can exteriorisation—the defining property of the human—effect an (ontologically impossible) reduction of “the human” to “the animal”? Stiegler in fact attempts to evade this contradiction by suggesting that this post-human animal is rather only one “*aspect*” or “*side*” [*pan*] of animal vigilance. Vigilance, it should be recalled, is the reactive will to survival lived instinctively from within the utter darkness of non-consciousness, the latter consisting in the absence of both *unconsciousness* and *preconsciousness*. Here, after again acknowledging only that his argument is founded upon the *assumption* that “human attention is defined as *separate* from nervous system vigilance” (*Taking Care*, 96), Stiegler then suggests that the *capture* of human attention by postindustrial marketing systems results in “a regression to instincts” (97). A regression, that is to say, to *animality*.

Attention capture, he argues, results specifically from the *abandoning* exteriorisation of the human psychic realm onto psychotechnological or computational devices. The human, in other words, in delegating both memory and decision to artefactual computers (in the broadest sense), no longer exists in a transductive relation with technicity, but rather abandons that very interiorisation which marks the human out from the animal. Whereas properly human transductive relations with exteriorised (inherited) knowledge constitute what Stiegler calls “long circuits” or circuits of “transindividuation,” the contemporary marketing system, he argues, thus “short circuits” this relation in the abandonment of the interior to the exterior. Together, these constitute for Stiegler the *pharmakon* of human-technical becoming. Here, Stiegler names the curative transindividuation *psychotechnics*, in order to distinguish it from

the poisonous *psychotechnological* short-circuit. The question, however, remains: how can “the human” *regress* to that being which he or she never was?

For Stiegler, it is the combination of marketing systems, speculative capital, and psychotechnologies which constitutes societies of control in contrast to the disciplinary societies of “modernity” (103). As a result, the capture of attention requires—

the biological model of a human central nervous system technologically produced by technologies of control; this kind of nervous system is an attribute of a gregarious, disindividuated mass whose brains have been stripped [*énucléés*] of consciousness ... a nervous system forever enclosed within strict neurological limits, significantly constraining both training and consciousness (97-8).

The difficulty here concerns the contrast between the human “aspect” of animality and animality as such, as well as the animal him- or herself, whom Stiegler deems genetically incapable of taking on any aspect of humanity whatsoever. With this notion of a no longer conscious human mass reduced to the biological, to the *animal*, by way of disindividuating psychotechnologies, Stiegler in fact suggests a symbolic *animalisation* that is actually a literal *becoming-animal* in its reduction to non-conscious vigilance. In other words, how can these two “aspects” of biological short-circuit be differentiated, except perhaps by reference to pre-existing classification systems?

However, it would seem that, despite being thus reduced to the darkness of an animal enclosed within “strict neurological limits,” Stiegler’s non-conscious post-human nonetheless appears to retain a specific—albeit significantly constrained—capacity for both epiphylogenesis (training) and consciousness, which Stiegler will later call “the most minimal human ‘subject’” (100). How can this be? Without that consciousness which Stiegler, by way of an explicit misreading of Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* in the first volume of *Technics and Time*, claims is the appearing of the *grammē as such*, the human must thus necessarily become “pure life” in an originary *transformation* that can never be a *regression* to instincts.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Stiegler cites Derrida in support of his claim that the “emergence of the *grammē as such*” is at once the emergence of a uniquely human consciousness—it marks, in other words, the second *coup*, the “the *différance* of *différance*” (*Technics and Time*, I:137). However, there is no suggestion whatsoever of this in Derrida’s text. In fact, the opposite is the case. Derrida rather makes clear in the passage cited by Stiegler that the *originary* movement of *différance*—

Again, Stiegler must attempt to separate the two “aspects,” that is, if he is to continue to assume a “separation” between attention and vigilance. Psychotechnologies, he suggests at this point, do indeed eliminate consciousness, “but through the *elimination* of attention, not its capture [*captation*]” (102, my emphasis). But again, how can these “aspects” be differentiated, insofar as the human, defined futurally, must have attention and thus anticipation *eliminated* in order to *become* a *captured* animal. The difference, in short, concerns only the process by which “the human” becomes what “the animal” always already is. Moreover, it is this question of *how* such a reduction takes place which will return us to the question of pure life, of the trace, and of the recapacitation of the cell.

### Automatic biology

Firstly, writes Stiegler, the human is made “minimal” insofar as attention is delegated to “automata that then become its captors, meters, gauges, warning signals, alarms, and so on. Attention in this sense is precisely folded back [*rabattue*] on its automatisable behaviours of vigilance, the psychic having been reduced to a pure function of the biological” (*Taking Care*, 101; trans. modified). Here then, “pure biology” is the equivalent, or at least a variant, “another side or aspect of [*tout un pan de*],” of an alarm clock telling you to brush your teeth or, better, of a pop-up telling you consume some “meat,” this latter irrespective of whether it takes place within limits imposed by agribusiness or by the availability of prey.<sup>135</sup>

In Stiegler’s terms, both the “minimal” (post)human and the vigilant animal are determined, and condemned, to retention without protention; the *différance* of *grammatisation* limited absolutely by a fully-automated archive retrieval which offers no possibility of individuation. In other words, both nonhuman animals and posthuman animals can only react, but never respond, insofar as they lack the necessary lack. This,

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“the trace as the unity of the double movement of protention and retention”—always “*goes far beyond* the possibilities of ‘intentional consciousness’” (*Of Grammatology*, 84). It is, he makes clear, already this “first” coup, this “new structure of nonpresence,” which “makes the *grammē* appear *as such*” (84).

<sup>135</sup> One can thus better understand why Stiegler’s primary example of this animalising process is the way the marketing systems of agribusiness exclude, a priori, “the possibility of any choice of foodstuffs outside of the intelligence associated with agriculture and of food itself” (*Taking Care*, 213n8).

insists Stiegler, is the poisonous aspect of the *pharmakon* which is technological becoming, the danger *indissociable* from its promised remedy. And yet, this is also the very *negation* of technical becoming (as transindividuation), which Stiegler posits as the very essence of the human. The human is, in short, at once indissociable *and* dissociable from technical becoming. Moreover, I will argue, insofar as human *psychotechnics* cannot be separated from both animal and posthuman vigilance, the latter effected by *psychotechnologies*, this necessarily undoes Stiegler's founding human-animal distinction which promises a technical remedy to technological poison.

To understand this contradiction at the heart of technical becoming, it is necessary to explore in more detail exactly how it is that psychotechnologies produce the posthuman. In abandoning the psychic realm to artefactual computers, claims Stiegler, the unconscious and preconscious (i.e., habitual) interiorisation of "the structure of inheritance and transmission" is interrupted (*Technics and Time*, I:140). In this way sociocultural inheritance is replaced by "tertiary retentions," that is to say, by exteriorised memory aids which have been standardised so as to be "formalisable, calculable, and finally controllable" (*Taking Care*, 99). In other words, both nonhuman animals and their posthuman aspect are reduced to a calculable uniformity. However, whereas for the former this takes place at the level of speciation through the "natural" biotechnologies of their genes, the latter are rather transformed into a "disindividuated mass" through the psychotechnologies that are computational devices, and which are thus also *biotechnologies*. Here then, this notion of the human as that which is made calculable through memory returns us yet again to Nietzsche, and it is from there, finally, that we can approach Dolly once more.

As we have seen, Stiegler agrees with Derrida's understanding of *différance* as "the history of life in general" (*Technics and Time*, I:137), only then to shift the terms of Derrida's argument so as to posit a second, supplemental "stage of *différance*" from which the possibility of human consciousness emerges. Derrida, however, explicitly refuses any such "second *coup*." Rather, he affirms that the "double movement of protention and retention" is precisely the mark, or the trace, of *living* being (which is not necessarily to say *organic* being) and at once "the becoming-time of space and the becoming-space of time" ("Différance," 8). This trace of being-futural we located too in Nietzsche's philosophy, through the notion of *translation* that is at once a *re-cognition of sense*. It is this recognition which, irreducible to cogitating activity, inscribes both finitude and memory—understood as the sedimented, habitual

“already-there”—in and as every living being. It is precisely this notion of finitude and memory, however, which Stiegler seeks to reserve for the human alone.

Despite this, there remain interesting parallels between Nietzsche and Stiegler. Both, for example, insist on the importance of memory aids—whether these are called *mnemotechnics* or tertiary retentions. For both, they make possible a calculation and computation which is necessarily pharmacological: at once poisonous threat and curative gift. For Stiegler, tertiary retentions reserve the possibility of inventive transindividuation as well as posthuman disindividuation. For Nietzsche, they represent the precondition for breeding an animal with the right to make promises as well as that most fearful development whereby “ghostly schemata” efface the appearing of radical particularity. The major difference, however, concerns *calculability*. For Nietzsche, “the human”—in common with all living beings—must first be produced as uniformly calculable as the immanent condition for the taking place of posthuman invention *beyond* calculability and uniformity. By contrast, this production of the calculable human is, for Stiegler, the reduction *to* a nonhuman animal, and thus the elimination of all possibility of invention. Stiegler’s animal, in other words, is Nietzsche’s human, and vice versa.

Whereas Stiegler fears that technology threatens to poison the exceptional status of the human, I suggest that, for Nietzsche, the threat which is indissociable from its curative promise is that of the exceptional *transhuman*. Furthermore, it is here that the pharmacology of the Nietzschean promise, explored in its creative aspect in the previous chapter, intersects with Stiegler’s by way of the notion of “infidelity.”

The major difference, however, is that Nietzsche does not require a reinstalled human-animal, culture-nature dichotomy in order to articulate the threat within the promise of technicity, the inseparable poison-remedy of its *pharmakon*. Insofar as for Stiegler “computational psychotechnology always aims at *substituting* for attention, theorising and modelling attention and its institutions, destroying them by seeming not even to imagine an attention beyond vigilance” (*Taking Care*, 102), what I am suggesting here is that together Nietzsche and Derrida allow us to see that it is Stiegler himself who seems unable to imagine an attention beyond “mere” vigilance.<sup>136</sup> By way

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<sup>136</sup> It is therefore something of an irony that Stiegler collapses the “cybernetic reductionism” of psychotechnologies—a reductionism identical to that through which he figures nonhuman animals—into “a field of applications within agribusiness, in its pejorative sense” (*Taking Care*, 103).



of a prefatory gesture, let us recall that everything which Stiegler reserves for the human, both Nietzsche and Derrida extend to every living being—that which, in Stiegler’s words,

comes from an originary forgetting, *ēpimētheia* as delay, the fault of Epimetheus. This becomes meaningful only in the melancholy of Prometheus, as anticipation of death, where the facticity of the already-there that equipment is for the person born into the world signifies the end: this is a Promethean structure of being-for-death, a structure in which concern [*pré-occupation*] is not the simple covering-over [*occultation*] of *Eigenlichkeit*. This is the question of time (*Technics and Time*, I:142).

Rather than requiring an instauration of human exceptionalism, it is the very deconstruction of the human-animal and nature-culture binaries which installs the curative *promise* of invention. Such a promise, moreover, always already retains within itself not the threat of a poisonous animality, but rather *the threat of an excessive mutability*. Furthermore, as the “Dolly technique” demonstrates, this *pharmakon* of technical becoming is found at the genetic as well as at the sensory level: a writing, a *technicity*, of and on the body. It is already there, in other words, in the iterability that is recapacitation.

### **Taking care with the generations**

Let us recall that, for Stiegler—and only insofar as one can assume molecular biology is correct—“the somatic memory of the *epigenetic* and the germinal memory of the *genetic* ... in principle do not communicate with each other” (*Technics and Time*, II:4). Even at the time of Stiegler’s writing, however, this claim was already becoming increasingly untenable within the praxis of molecular biology, as we have seen in our discussion of the Dolly technique.

Basically, Stiegler here subscribes, at least as far as *nonhuman* animals are concerned, to August Weismann’s theory of generation. Hugely influential during the “industrialising” period of disciplinary society, generational inheritance is here conceived of as vertical movement only through the germ line, with germ line cells understood as distinct from somatic cells insofar as, while they reproduce themselves in the finite bodies of living beings by way of linear differentiation, they themselves

remain undifferentiated and thus immortal. Indeed, it is far from surprising that the legacy of Weismannian theory functioned most explicitly in the notion of industrial selective-breeding programmes. In our brave new postindustrial era of complex multifactorial interactions, however, it is instead “becoming plausible,” as Melinda Cooper writes, “that ‘life itself’ might be more comprehensively defined by the proliferative, self-regenerative powers of the ES [embryonic stem] cell rather than the Weismannian theory of the germ line” (*Life as Surplus*, 139).

As we have seen, the discovery of an inherent potentiality of cellular recapacitation interrupts the notion of a linear temporality moving irrevocably towards a specificity of function. It interrupts, that is to say, a causally determined genetic movement, replacing it with a biological plasticity or flexibility. Hence, it is only insofar as genes are situational and contextual that there can be at once a reversal, a transversal, and re-becoming of genetic initiation as the result of “external” or “environmental” factors. In short, the genetic (*germen*) and the epigenetic (*sōma*) are *co-constituted in a transductive relation*—the elements of which do not precede their relating—which can be *transmitted both genetically and epigenetically*. Put as simply as possible, what this notion of “situated biological communication” implies is that what is “learned” has an affect at the cellular level, and vice versa, in positive feedback loops. The epigenetic can be transmitted genetically, and the genetic epigenetically, albeit with the necessary translations which result from the “overleaping” of discontinuous, yet reciprocally determining, domains.

This is, of course, worded in such a way as to recall Nietzsche’s notion of translation as discussed in chapter two. However, instead of “beginning with a nerve stimulus,” as Nietzsche does in “On Truth and Lie,” there is rather already before and beyond that singular touch an overleaping both from the *cell* to the epigenetic-as-metaphor, and from recognition (the iterative making of sense) to the genetic-as-metaphor, in a complete disorientation of linear temporality. Every differentiated cell, in other words, constitutes a stammering “material” translation or *exteriorisation* of the habitual “already-there” of an (epigenetic) experienced context. Every “experience,” every apprehension, constitutes a stammering “sensible” translation or *exteriorisation* of the habitual “already-there” of a genetic context. Both genesis and epigenesis are thus reciprocally articulated, each acting as tenor to the other’s stimulus, that is, *each losing itself and each other in a movement of errant transmission, of dissemination*. Such is “life” that “has freed itself from life” (Derrida *Demeure*, 89) or, in an extension

and transformation of Stiegler's definition of epiphylogenesis, it is "*living by other means than life* [*vivant par d'autres moyens que la vie*]"—which is what the history of technics consists in" (*Technics and Time*, I:135).

Writing—Stiegler's privileged example of exteriorisation—is here always already *a writing of and on the body*. The dislocating movement of *différance*, the trace as the unity of the double movement of protention and retention, is thus indeed that "new structure of nonpresence" which Derrida describes as the emergence of *the living* from the amoeba to *homo sapiens* and beyond. Such is the movement which both "makes the *grammē* appear *as such*" and at once "makes possible the emergence of the systems of writing in the narrow sense" (*Of Grammatology*, 84). There is, in short, at every level—and, indeed, more precisely when and where such levels can in fact no longer be distinguished—the denaturalising movement of life that is *the originary technicity of living being*. Why should exteriorisation be restricted to "organised albeit *inorganic* matter," as Stiegler repeatedly claims? Is language organic, or inorganic? Is the organised matter of the cell "interior" to living being or "exterior," exteriorised or interiorised, or are they rather co-constituted feedback effects?

What then, is Dolly for Stiegler? Who then, is she for Nietzsche? Who and what, such is Dolly insofar as she *is*. As a result, it is no longer necessary to evade the question of nonhuman tool use, or to get bogged down in the interminable "nature versus nurture" debate. Recalling the historicity *and* historiology of the Addo elephants, we can now perhaps better understand how their memory of the murderousness of humans comes to be transmitted through the generations at both the genetic and epigenetic (and thus epiphylogenetic) levels, the elephants having become both "instinctively" nocturnal as a result of their relations with human animals, and "socially" aggressive in their relations with human animals. Barbara Noske highlights this undecidability in her description of the third- and fourth-generation post-event elephants as "the cultural heirs of the fear and hatred among their ancestors for our species" (*Beyond Boundaries*, 155). Interesting here, is that fear is traditionally conceived as "instinctive," whereas hatred is generally considered to be a "cultural" manifestation. And yet, can such fear be considered instinctive to the species? As genetically determined? Or is it rather a *learned* fear? And what of hatred? Is it taught and learned, passed along, over and over again in the elephant equivalent of an oral tradition? Or has this hatred in actuality pervaded these nonsubstitutable living beings at the cellular level of their very way(s) of being?

Indeed, I completely agree with Stiegler's description of epiphylogenesis as that which "bestows [*accorde*] its identity" upon an individual: "the accents of his [or her] speech, the style of his [or her] approach, the force of his [or her] gesture, the unity of his [or her] world" (*Technics and Time*, I:140). I would, however, insist upon a single—but by no means minor—coda: such an individual is never "the human," but "is" rather the way of being *as such* and, as such, being is always already being-with. One result of this is that Stiegler's founding human-animal distinction, in its attempt to distinguish the psychotechnics of transindividuation from the reductive vigilance effected by psychotechnologies, promises a technical remedy to the poison of technology which can no longer be maintained. In its place, however, the originary technicity of living being—the iterative writing of and on the body—founds both the pharmacological *promise* of postgenomics and the promissory discourse known as transhumanism. In the next section, we will see how just such a doubling of the promise helps us to understand the dangers of a prematurely stalled deconstruction of the nature-culture and human-animal dichotomies.

### **The transhuman promise**

Transhumanism, such as espoused by philosopher Nick Bostrom and referred to briefly in the introduction to this thesis, can be schematically described as both the desire and the promise of *enhancing* the human by way of technological, informatic, and bioengineering developments.<sup>137</sup> In the main, however, transhumanist discourse is equally characterised by a dogmatic refusal to put into question the supreme value it attributes to "the human" as well as its belief in a sovereign human agency. Moreover, I agree with Richard Twine when he claims a close relation between the transhumanist imaginary as organico-technical *assemblage* and "the capitalist desire to reinvent itself ... through the biotechnological trumping of ecological and material limits" (*Animals as Biotechnology*, 14). This relation is, I would argue, that of a spatiotemporal *mapping*: mutually articulating both a topography and a temporality. Indeed, it is with the notion of cell recapacitation and especially, as suggested above, in its relation to the heavily speculated and highly speculative field of tissue engineering (TE), that the

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Bostrom's "A History of Transhumanist Thought" in *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, 14:1 (2005), 1-25.

*promise* sustaining the utopian transhumanist imaginary comes most clearly to the fore. As Melinda Cooper writes, TE is, in principle at least,

capable of perpetuating embryogenesis, of reliving the emergence of the body over and over again, independently of all progression. Here it is not only spaces, forms, and bodies that become continuously transformable, but also the divisible instants of a chronological lifetime, so that any one body can be returned to or catapulted into any point in its past or future, and into any past or future it *could have* and *could still* materialise. In other words TE not only seeks to “return” the body to nonmetric *space* but also to nonmetric *time*—and to recapitulate the various chronologies of morphogenesis from here. In principle, then, the adult body will be able to relive its embryogenesis again and again—including those it has never experienced before (*Life as Surplus*, 121).

Here then, is the dream—and the promise, itself necessarily temporal, that capital is being ventured on—of the transhuman: not only would the human form be continuously updatable and editable, but death itself would cease to impose its limit. Temporality thus promises its own overcoming, and hence the overcoming of finitude, the humanness of being having become immortal and without limit, able to relive its own life eternally as well as the infinite number of lives otherwise denied to it by the fleshly finite necessity of choice and chance. The transhuman utopia is, in other words, Nietzsche’s reactive *ascetic ideal* (*Genealogy*, III:28). Seeking to overcome the constraints of life itself, the transhuman is rather the *absolute irresponsibility of an unconditional infidelity*, with being itself having become endlessly reversible, reproducible, revisable, and transmutable.

It is not by chance that this description can, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the constant innovation of speculative, “fictitious” capital, which Stiegler describes as the “systemic organisation of *infidelity*” (*New Critique*, 83). No longer materially dependent upon commodity production, and thus upon constant and variable capital, for speculative capital the stake is rather *time itself*, that is to say, the risk inherent in the undetermination of the temporal. Its promise is thus a promise *because* it is without material reality. The future, in other words, determines the present.

At the same time, however, speculative capital seeks to *overcome time*—and thus finitude—by its constant innovation, exemplified above all by the promise of speculative biocapital and of supply-siding (the economic theology so beloved of neoliberals which states that supply will create demand, if we only have faith), and

thus melds with the promise of the transhuman. Indeed, the transhuman consumer promises, and is promised by, biocapital to modify itself precisely so as to enable itself to consume that undemanded supply.

For example, an individualised therapeutics deploys a rhetoric of genetic determinism in order to justify its promised utility by way of a promised threat (of future disease), and as such *performs* genetic determinism so as to constitute fetishised individuals as “consumers-in-waiting.”<sup>138</sup> In increasingly constructing such therapeutics as preventative, that is, as *speculative*, the potential market for drugs is thus massively enlarged from the “sick” to the “potentially sick”—that is, to every single living being with sufficient purchasing power—in a further fragmentation of sociopolitical groupings into pharmaceutically mediated individuals. At the same time, this speculation upon future health and future illness also serves to “prove” the determinist rhetoric as scientific “fact,” but only insofar as no material consequences of “effective” preventative medicine—which itself is based entirely on probability—can be recorded.

The individual, in other words, in remaining healthy, at once both justifies the founding rhetoric of genetic determinism while at the same time must put into question the notion of just how determined such determinism can therefore actually be. Personalised therapeutics thus feeds into the transhumanist promise of technological enhancement or even immortality, a sacrifice for salvation which at the same time ties in with the promissory, messianic discourse of the “old” industrial notion of “modernity.” Such a rhetoric, as we have seen, employs a teleological determinism in order to demand that the imperfect countries of the South sacrifice themselves today for the promise of a perfect First-World Tomorrow.

All of this, perhaps, is promised by Dolly—both as a technique and as a rewritten body, a supply to be literally consumed and a supply for the consumerist need for constant innovation. And as too with Dolly, within the transhumanist dream-promise of a technologically mediated immortality, the future constitutes at once the threat and the promise of the present thoroughly overdetermined by economic interest.

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<sup>138</sup> On this, see chapter four of Sunder Rajan’s *Biocapital*.

### **The *pharmakon* is double: immortality and mutability**

Initially, I suggested that the pharmacology of the promise consisted of the remedy of betrayal and the poison of the transhuman. This, however, is not sufficient. Rather schematically, we can now say that the pharmacology of the promise is itself double: on one hand, there is the promised remedy and poisonous threat of biocapital and, on the other, there is the promised remedy and poisonous threat of a Nietzschean betrayal. More precisely, the promise of a transhuman utopia necessarily brings with it the threat of a catastrophic and cancerous zoonosis, just as the promise of the right to make promises must at once threaten to collapse differences in the cynical nihilism of an absolute relativism. This latter, as we shall see, will return us, by way of a conclusion, to the question of the revolutionary animal encounter and of its congealing into an interested parody of itself.

For both then, the promised cure concerns a deconstruction of human-animal, nature-culture and organic-inorganic binaries, while the threat is thus the poison of *excessive mutability*. The difference, however, is between a neoliberal appropriation which seeks to stall, and thus *master*, that very deconstructive movement, and the vigilance of a deconstruction which seeks always again to respond.

In this, it comes as no surprise that the economically-invested rhetoric deployed to justify the promise of biotechnology depends upon a reductive notion of the nonhuman animal as genetically determined, even as the promise of biotechnology resides in the potential capitalisation of genetic *indetermination*. This is because, insofar as the transhuman promise seeks to gift to itself—albeit at a price yet to be determined—an ever greater *mastery* of so-called “nature,” it must therefore at the same time install a “humanism beyond humanism.” It must maintain, in short, an absolute culture-nature dichotomy in order to justify the promise of its ongoing deconstruction.

Such an incomplete, or stalled, deconstruction of the human-animal and nature-culture binaries, such as one finds too in the genetic determinism brought in to “ground” Stiegler’s philosophy, thus permits a naturalising discourse which effaces flexibility so as to pre-empt (or short-circuit) any possibility of unconditional hospitality. In this way, both discourses reproduce an exclusive hierarchy which, in refusing the nonsubstituability and thus the value of other beings, renders them mere instruments in the production and reproduction of commodification. It serves, in other

words, to close down the ethical opening (as discussed in the third part of this thesis) in order to justify an ongoing mastery—a determined mastery of life operating with the authority of *facts*. At the same time, it underwrites the transhumanist promise in effacing the threat of excessive mutability—of the *non-mastery* of life—figured by the incalculable emergence of zoonotic (inter-species) disease and by the media spectacle of ever more catastrophic killings of nonhuman animals. It is, in this sense, the *master* which only ever reacts, and who never responds.

To better understand this, let us return, with the help of Melinda Cooper, to the Weismannian theory of generation. Charles Minot, who helped to secure the influence of the theory, did so by contrasting the “normal” linear and irreversible differentiation of cells by reference to the pathological exception that is, in Cooper’s phrase, the “indifferent divisibility” of cancer. For Minot, “abnormal growth” such as tumours and cancers constitute the “familiar” phenomenon “of things escaping from inhibitory control and overgrowing” (Minot; cit. Cooper *Life as Surplus*, 137). Such growth power, he maintains, results from cells remaining in the undifferentiated “immortal” state insofar as they have somehow “got beyond the control of the inhibitory [i.e. differentiating] force, the regulatory power which ordinarily keeps them in” (cit. Cooper, 137). The cancerous cell is thus pathological as a result of “its indifference to the normal limits to differentiation and division” (Cooper *Life as Surplus*, 138).

Recalling here how tissue engineering (TE) can be considered as sustaining the promise of the utopian transhumanist imaginary, Cooper points out that with TE there is “the distinct possibility, in particular, that the extremely plastic, mutable cells of the early embryo may end up proliferating too well, giving rise to cancerous growths rather than restoring health” (125). Genes, in other words, insofar as they cannot be determined, always reserve the risk of an incalculably errant dissemination.

Hugely important to the discussion here, Cooper then goes on to write that it is here, with the promise and threat of excessive mutability, that one can locate once again the move from Fordism to post-Fordism, and from disciplinary societies to societies of control. “Where the machine body of the industrial era,” she writes, “was plagued by the problems of fatigue, depletion, or entropy ..., the postindustrial body is more likely to be overcome by a *surplus productivity that is indistinguishable from a surplus of life*—that is, crises of overproduction or the dangerous, excessive vitality of cancer” (125). One thinks here again of those “extremophiles” who, potentially



developed to consume industrial waste such as the gigantic cowshit lagoons generated by agribusiness feedlots, in fact constitute a “surplus of life” engineered to survive on the crises of overproductivity, but whose very vitality, or liveliness, may well result in ever more dangerous metastasising diseases.

The pathological therefore, is also that which refuses differentiation, refuses finitude, that which “refuses to submit to the limits of generational time and death” (139). It is thus no surprise that during the industrial, disciplinary period cancerous cells were considered unproductive and “inherently sterile,” whereas today the “quasi-cancerous properties of the ES [embryonic stem] cell line are in fact enormously productive” (139).<sup>139</sup> (And it is here, of course, that one must mention the patented, cancer-bearing OncoMouse.) With such postindustrial crises of capitalist overproduction, however, what Marx describes in the third volume of *Capital* as the tendential fall in the rate of profit must henceforth be resituated at the level of the biosphere itself.

The *promise* of excessive mutability—and thus of the organic-technological assemblage of transhuman immortality—that is located in the recapacitation of stem cells, and located too in Dolly and Polly’s bodyings, is thus at once the *threat* of excessive mutability, of the cancerous overabundance of life which ends up consuming all life in its relentless pursuit of its own accumulation. One can only think here of its parallels—both *topographical* and *temporal*—with the current financialisation of the globe: of the relentless accumulation of speculative capital concealed behind an apparently “neutral” rhetoric of the market as merely instrumental, and of an incalculable future which both determines and impoverishes the present. As Sunder Rajan writes,

Excess, expenditure, exuberance, risk, and gambling can be generative because they can create that which is unanticipated, perhaps even unimagined. But this can only be so if the temporal order of production is inverted, away from the present building toward the future and instead toward the future always been called in to account for the present (*Biocapital*, 116).

Here then, I have argued that the *promise* of a transhumanist organic-technological assemblage is explicitly disclosed in the promise of tissue engineering—a promise of

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<sup>139</sup> As Cooper notes, the term “embryonic stem cell” was in fact initially interchangeable with that of “embryonal carcinoma cell” (*Life as Surplus*, 140).

excessive mutability and mobility equally valorised in neoliberal discourses of telecommunications and postindustrial capital. Turning in the next section to focus on the *threat* of excessive mutability, and of the future being called in to account for the present, I aim to show that the latter is just as clearly disclosed in the contemporary discourse of zoonotic pandemics.

### **Making sense beyond species: zoonoses**

Diseases such as HIV/AIDS, foot-and-mouth disease (FMD), bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and its human variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD), severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), avian flu, and swine flu are all termed *zoonoses*, meaning that they fracture the imaginary boundaries between species for so long held to be impregnable. They mark then, sites of excessive mutability that are also in a sense “transgenic.” While it may transpire that zoonoses are in fact far from uncommon, they are at present the “natural” equivalents of rogue states, in the sense that both serve to interrupt the “smooth” Western discourse of free market globalisation constituted as the transcendence of neoliberalism over the barbarism of primitive nature.

Zoonoses are, in other words, diseases of mutability and mobility at the levels of biology, class, and geography, exceeding the imaginary limits of both the homogeneous species and the homogeneous nation-state and just as likely to infect the affluent as the poor (which is by no means to suggest a parity of *treatment*, in every sense). Paradoxically, one result of this rupturing of the human-animal division is that, while the rhetoric of genetic determinism preserves nonhuman animals as automata and thus instrumentalisable, the accompanying rhetoric of imminent zoonotic pandemic functions to support and further reinforce that very division. There emerge, in other words, “new discourses and technologies seeking to secure human health through the segregation of human and animal life and finding in the spectre of pandemic a universal rationale for institutionalising speciesism on a hitherto unprecedented scale” (Shukin *Animal Capital*, 184).

Most obvious here are the holocausts of nonhuman animals which accompanied the recent announcements of the apparent threat posed to human health by foot-and-mouth disease, avian flu, and swine flu. Interestingly, FMD in particular

makes explicit the economic interests which underwrite such announcements. Once one realises that foot-and-mouth is a disease which is dangerous neither to human nor to nonhuman animals, but only to *productivity*, it becomes all too clear that the mounds of corpses were simply nodes in a network of political and economic strategies concerned with protecting export revenue.

Indeed, this renders explicit the performative dimension of the fear produced by the promised threat of zoonotic irruption. Alongside the constitution of a global humanity united by the threat of pandemic, what *also* gets constituted, as Shukin notes, “are those populations, both human and animal, perceived as compromising its survival and therefore at risk of being socially ghettoised or materially sacrificed” (*Animal Capital*, 183). There are any number of examples, but two will here suffice: that of the unfounded narratives of HIV originating in “unhygienic” and “primitive” Africa, and of BSE-CJD originating in “backward” India, both figured as a result of overly intimate relationships between human and nonhuman animals (rather than being, as in the case of BSE at least, a result of the Western industrial practice of feeding herbivorous farmed animals the “waste”—that is, previously non-commodifiable—body parts of their own kin).<sup>140</sup>

In this, one can see how the promised threat of excessive mutability can both justify a racist pre-emptive interventionist national strategy, such as that recently implemented by US neoconservatives, as well as further increasing the value of, and thus the financial speculation upon, an individualised therapeutics and the promise of biotechnology in general. In short, the promise of excessive mutability is, in a further pharmacological twist, both a poison and its *own* remedy. This then constitutes the threat and promise of neoliberal capitalism as it seeks, yet again, to reproduce itself beyond its own limit: the technological promise of a material human transcendence and the threat of an unending imperialist war against a newly hostile “nature.”

Here then, we have located a number of mutually articulating discourses which together help to mark the shift from industrial disciplinary societies to postindustrial societies of biopolitical control. It is a shift, however, which nonetheless retains within its borders an (albeit marginalised) industrial commodity production, which carries the mark both of “backwardness” and of a (mythic) promise of

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<sup>140</sup> Similar “ghettoising” discourses of origin can be seen accompanying the mediatization of the SARS outbreak (China), as well as avian flu (China, in particular the Guangdong province) and swine flu (South America).

modernity to be further exploited. Together, the transhumanist biotechnological promise and the threat of biological mutability thus authorise an ever greater institutionalisation of “life as such,” a self-authorisation exceeding every nation-state boundary and extending beyond an imagined “universal humanity” and on through all levels of the biosphere. In this way, “life itself” is figured as that which must be controlled at all costs.

To summarise then, the *pharmakon* of mutability supplies the rationale for an ever more intensive capture of the contingencies of biological life within the calculus of power: the promise demands control at the microbiological level, the threat demands control at the globalising level—all of which is intimately bound up with financial speculation and the promise of astronomical returns. Further, the very incalculability of the promise-threat is precisely that which authorises both an imperial violence in the name of the “humanitarian” and a pre-emptive violence in the name of the future.

### **The pharmacology of betrayal: the over-animal and collapsed animality**

Contrast this, however, with the *posthumanist* promise demanded by Nietzsche, and with the animal encounter as a process and a fidelity which demands a promise of excessive responsibility. On the one hand, as we have seen, the pharmacology of the promise is at once the transhuman and the posthumanist, with each being the remedy and the poison of the other. On the other hand, however, the posthumanist promise too, as I have argued, is *the promise of excessive mutability*, and as such it must also, whilst promising a cure, simultaneously threaten to poison. The difference, I would suggest, is that this latter demands an unwavering fidelity to that which remains to come, while the neoliberal promise requires an unwavering *infidelity* to that which already is.

Nietzschean mutability—otherwise known as *will to power*—contrasts, in other words, with the constant and *calculable* innovation of speculative capital. The *difference*, rather than the *opposition*, is, in short, between responsibility and irresponsibility. While the latter seeks to master time and finitude by way of a calculation which can thus never be inventive, the former must, in opening itself to the new, both *give* and *take* time insofar as it remains vigilant to an already shared finitude.

Similarly, while the excessive mutability underpinning the transhuman promise of immortality—the mastery of “nature” itself—seeks both to efface and to pre-emptively remedy the threat of a poisonous cancerous mutability, so too the promise of the zoogenetic animal encounter in which the new comes into being, insofar as it depends upon the mutability of sense, must at once contend with the poison of nihilistic parody. In other words, it is, as we have seen, the simultaneous mutability of *recognised* sense into habit and dogma—bringing at once the possibility of a cynical, self-interested play which seeks to reinstall mastery—which haunts every inventive phrasing. Indeed, we should recall in this context Werner Hamacher’s reference to the “still undrained, still unexhausted decay” which must always live on (“Disgregation,” 160). Hence, the *pharmakon* of mutability demands, if we are to be responsible, the vigilance of an eternally returning demand which must “take leave of all faith and every wish for certainty” (Nietzsche *The Gay Science*, §347). This is the chance, the threat and the promise, to interrupt the nihilism of economic interest and the sedimented investiture of power.

Another way to understand this *pharmakon* of mutability is by way of *iterability*, synonymous throughout this thesis with both *recapitulation* and being *as such*. In this sense, the threat of an ever vigilant deconstruction is also that of excessive mutability—that of *collapsing* difference(s), rather than encountering singular ways of being. To collapse the singularities of difference amid a generalised indifference of equality is to render everything equally without value, and thus to fall into the nihilism of absolute relativism. A fall, in other words, into *infidelity*—a negation of the world in advocating the parodic play of cynical self-interest.

### **Conclusion. Giving death to other animals: an ethics of vigilance**

The poison of mastery demands the remedy of vigilance—a *pharmakon* which must ever again be renegotiated. It demands too, as we have seen, the strength to face finitude in remaining faithful to the maddening displacement of its demand from the other. Such is the animal encounter which calls forth those tropes which function in the opposite direction to the reactive ordering of animalisation, marking instead with the borrowed costume of a forbidden metonymy the coming into being of a monstrous, unheard-of relation, thus staging the creation of an indecipherable and unmasterable

materiality. While excessive mutability interrupts the *phantasmatic* effect of every genealogical tie—its promise and its threat, its poison and its remedy—it demands too the strength to outlive “the human” in attesting to the precarity of a shared finitude, and thus to the nonsubstitutable deaths of all living beings. Only in this way might it become *unthinkable* that other animals—whether human or nonhuman—can be put to death with impunity.

The dead zombie flesh of the instrumentalised animal is, I have argued, the inverse of the “revolutionary spirit” of the living corpse that returns. Whereas the latter dismantles the machinery of animalisation, the former serves only to reproduce a symbolic logic of oppression which ultimately constitutes subjugated beings “deserving” of their oppression. While a giving finitude does *not* necessarily prohibit the production of cloned or “pharm” animals, it does however *displace the relation*, demanding as it does an ethical encounter in place of that sadistic mastery defined so well by Donna Haraway in the epigraph to this chapter. At the same time, such vigilance inevitably demands that we engage in the wider question of whether nonhuman animals should indeed be farmed at all. This is not mastery, but fidelity to being together: a post-humanism rather than a transhuman-ism. For actual animals, human and nonhuman, the transhuman promises only an ever increasing exploitation and control, whereas a vigilant posthumanism promises to open itself to the zoogenetic encounter, and thus to the incalculability of the future.

In this, one must, as Nietzsche insists, take leave of all certainty in order to dance even at the edges of abysses (*The Gay Science*, §347). Only then will the genocidal economy be interrupted, and only in this way might there come an unbounded community of those who love, of those who share their inability to share and who must ever again risk everything in search of asylum. Such is the *promise* of zoogenesis which resides in the responsibility of a vigilant betrayal, called into being in and as a thinking encounter with animals which interrupts the instrumentality of the transhuman, replacing its reductive calculation with an ethics of emergence.

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